

Russian parties angry over threat

MOSCOW (R) — Political groups in Russia erupted in fury Tuesday over a call by a top aide of President Boris Yeltsin for two leading parties to be banned from next month's election because they criticised a proposed new constitution. "Are we just supposed to applaud it (the constitution)?" a spokesman for the Communist Party asked angrily. And the leader of a pro-reform electoral bloc, which has also expressed doubts about the huge powers the president will enjoy under the draft national charter, said he would continue to discuss publicly the issues that "electors deem necessary." Liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky said in a statement: "The current leaders are losing even the elementary notion of democracy. If we fail to notice that, then the next step from authoritarian rule to dictatorship will be soon with us." The central electoral commission was meeting Tuesday to consider the call by First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeiko for the Communist Party and the Democratic Party of Russia, a prominent centrist group, to be removed from the list of parties taking part in the Dec. 12 poll.



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تيمز يومية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية، الراي.

Confusion over fate of diplomat

SANAA (AP) — Kidnapped American diplomat Haynes R. Mahoney was still in the hands of his Yemeni captors Tuesday a day after government officials reported they had negotiated his freedom. "The negotiations are still going on," said United States Information Service spokesman Rick Roberts. "We remain assured by the Yemeni government that they are doing everything in their power to have him freed." Interior Minister Yehya Al Mutawakil said he expected the tribesmen who abducted Mahoney on Thursday to release him soon. On Monday night, Mr. Mutawakil told the Associated Press that Mr. Mahoney, 44, was released and that the kidnappers' demands were met. But Tuesday morning, in an official statement distributed by the Yemen news agency SABA, the minister denied announcing Mr. Mahoney's release or saying any demands were met. Police officials in the desert province where Mr. Mahoney is held added to the confusion by insisting until Tuesday morning that the diplomat had been released by the tribesmen. Arab diplomatic sources said an agreement to release Mr. Mahoney was reached Monday night but that undisclosed snags impeded the actual release.

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Estonian president due here tomorrow

AMMAN (Petra) — The president of Estonia and his wife will arrive here Thursday on a four-day official visit to Jordan for talks with His Majesty King Hussein on Arab, regional and international issues as well as bilateral relations. The Estonian leader will visit archaeological sites and places of cultural and historical importance.

Unit off to Croatia

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday saw off a new batch of Jordanian Armed Forces personnel who left for Croatia to join the United Nations peacekeeping forces there.

Senate elects panel rapporteurs

AMMAN (Petra) — The Upper House of Parliament's (Senate) permanent committees Tuesday met under the chairmanship of Senate Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi and elected the committee's rapporteurs. The committees elected Zaid Rifai, Ahmad Tarawneh, Kamal Shaer and Marwan Khoud as rapporteurs of the foreign affairs, legal, financial and administrative committees respectively.

Qaisi promoted

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued Tuesday promoting director of the General Intelligence Department Mustafa Al Qaisi to the rank of general.

Gulf Arabs discuss aid for self-rule

RIYADH (AFP) — Deputy foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) met here Tuesday to discuss the GCC's financial contribution to Palestinian autonomy. An official close to the meeting said a document would be drawn up on the Middle East peace process and financing Palestinian autonomy, to be submitted to the next GCC summit in Riyadh on Dec. 20.

French military official visits Qatar

DOHA (AP) — A high-ranking French military official held talks Tuesday with Qatari leaders on strengthening defence relations between the two countries, the Qatar News Agency said. General Marc Monchal, chief of staff of French land forces, met Qatar's defence minister, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, who is also the crown prince and the emirate's commander-in-chief. The agency said discussions dealt with enhancing defence coordination and cooperation. But it gave no details.

U.N. inquiry team arrives in Somalia

MOGADISHU (AFP) — A three-man commission appointed by the U.N. secretary general to investigate the killing of United Nations peacekeepers in Somalia arrived here Tuesday. U.N. officials said. The commission's chairman, Matthew Ngulube, invited Somalia leaders "with pertinent information" to volunteer to depose to the commission. Mr. Ngulube is the chief justice of Zambia. "The commission will examine all activities involving UNOSOM II that have contributed to casualties both to (U.N.) personnel as well as to Somali nationals," Mr. Ngulube said.

Holst hospitalised

OSLO (AP) — Foreign Minister Johan Jorgen Holst has been hospitalised, probably for exhaustion, after a period of intense activity that included brokering a Middle East peace agreement. The foreign minister, 56, was admitted to the neurological department of the national hospital in Oslo for a few days. Foreign ministry spokesman Ingvar Havnen said Tuesday. "He is feeling much better," said Mr. Havnen. "It was most likely over-exertion, but we cannot exclude that it was a virus or something until the tests are over."

Autonomy talks make progress on detainees

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiators made progress on the key issue of the release of Palestinian prisoners at autonomy talks on Tuesday but major stumbling blocks remained.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath said the Israelis had submitted a detailed timetable for the release of all the prisoners, who number almost 11,000, according to humanitarian aid officials.

He indicated that the figure included about 1,200 held for "blood crimes," whom Israel had until now refused to release, insisting that they must all complete their sentences.

The two sides are trying to reach agreement on implementation of the Palestinian autonomy deal by a Dec. 13 deadline for the start of the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Palestinian sources said the talks could wind up Tuesday and resume next week. The latest session was held against a background of widespread violence in Gaza, where troops shot and wounded around 80 Palestinian demonstrators (see story below).

Dr. Shaath has said repeatedly he will not sign an accord on the autonomy arrangements without a timetable and written pledge that all Palestinian prisoners will be released.

Three main stumbling blocks remained Tuesday — the size of the Jewish settlement areas in the autonomous areas, control of international boundaries, and the limits of the Jericho area.

In Tunis, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat met two envoys of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to discuss the stalled autonomy negotiations, a Palestinian official said.

Mr. Arafat later told a meeting of the PLO leadership he had insisted that Israel honour its pledge to start withdrawing its troops from Gaza and Jericho on Dec. 13, as envisaged in the PLO-Israel accord signed on Sept. 13.

According to a participant at the PLO meeting, Mr. Arafat said he told the Israeli envoys the December deadline was "sacred."

Mr. Rabin's office denied a newspaper report Tuesday that he had sent a message to Mr. Arafat offering a slightly deeper military withdrawal in the Gaza Strip.

Mr. Rabin's spokesman Oded Ben-Ami had at first declined to confirm or deny the report in the newspaper Ayedioth Ahronoth.

But several hours later Mr. Rabin's office issued a denial. "Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has not sent any message whatsoever — written or oral — to Yasser Arafat and

everything published in today's newspapers regarding the contents of such a message is totally unfounded," it said.

Yedioth had said Mr. Rabin told Mr. Arafat in the message that he would agree to a Gaza troop pullback "a few kilometres" further than Israel first offered.

It said Mr. Rabin had also proposed stationing Palestinian observers alongside Israeli patrols on main roads in Gaza and Jericho.

Israel would also agree to Palestinian observers at Israeli-controlled border crossings between the West Bank and Jordan. Yedioth Ahronoth reported.

Israeli and PLO negotiators are at loggerheads over the scope of the withdrawal Israel agreed to make in Gaza and Jericho.

The control of border crossings and the size of the self-rule area in Jericho are other sticking points.

The newspaper said Mr. Rabin offered to recognise the Palestinian flag, anthem and uniforms — symbols of the independent state the PLO wants to establish and which Israel opposes.

Mr. Rabin also proposed building small airports, perhaps only for helicopters, in Jericho and Gaza, and establishing a Palestinian bank and

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King receives Pentagon official

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday received Frank Wisner, assistant secretary for policy at the U.S. Defence Department, who is leading a high-level defence delegation on a visit to the Middle East.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the King exchanged views with Mr. Wisner on regional and international issues as well as Jordanian-American relations.

The audience was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Abdul Hafez Mira'i.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali held talks with the U.S. delegation in a meeting attended by Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Al Anani.

The delegation arrived here Tuesday as part of a 13-day tour of the Middle East.



His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday meet with Frank Wisner, assistant secretary for policy at the U.S. Defence Department (Petra photo)

The delegation will assess Middle East military requirements and study ways to boost military cooperation with countries in the region.

The five-member delegation, the highest-ranking Defence Department mission to be dispatched to the Middle

East, also will discuss the restructuring of existing U.S. forces in the region during its visit.

The team will travel to Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. The delegation comprises senior officials from the State

Department's Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs and the U.S. Central Command.

A senior Pentagon official said last week that the mission will focus its talks on defining strategic requirements as well as current and future security threats (see page 3).

Christopher faces tough task in Damascus

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher faces a tough mission when he visits Syria during a tour to get Middle East peace rolling again, Syrian sources said Tuesday.

Mr. Christopher's visit on Sunday is the "toughest mission he has ever had in the region since he joined (President Bill) Clinton's foreign affairs team 11 months ago," the official English-language daily Syria Times said.

Officials and diplomats said Mr. Christopher would hold talks in Damascus with President Hafez Al Assad and Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa on how to resume Israel-Syria talks in Washington, suspended since mid-September.

Syria and Israel have held 11 rounds of talks since the opening of the U.S.-led Middle East peace conference in Madrid two years ago but have made no tangible progress towards peace.

Syria had threatened to boycott the next round of talks if Israel did not pledge to withdraw fully from the strategic Golan Heights, a plateau occupied by Israel in the 1967 war.

Mr. Christopher will be confronted with difficulties arising from implementation of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace accord signed in Washington in September, the Syria Times said.

It urged the secretary to press Israel to announce its readiness to withdraw from the occupied Arab lands.

"He (Christopher) should not press for any more concessions from the Arabs because they did give all that is needed to make the process of peace moving. His aim should be the other side this time, and all his attention should be concentrated on Israel," the Syria Times said.

"The Arabs are still counting on the Clinton administration's keenness to make Christopher's visit a success and to secure the U.S. image as an honest broker and a full partner," the paper said.

It said Syria would reject any Israeli pledge to withdraw partially from the Golan Heights and said the Jewish state should announce its readiness to withdraw fully from the Golan to pave the way for resumption of negotiations.

"The return to the negotiations table is pinned completely on Israel's pledges to withdraw from the territory it has occupied illegally."

"Obscure indications about its readiness to evacuate parts of the Golan Heights after knowing what is Syria prepared to offer in return are not enough and will be dropped," the paper said.

Arafat comes under renewed criticism over self-rule talks

TUNIS (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leaders met on Tuesday to discuss the founding self-rule talks with Israel as Yasser Arafat came under attack even from old-time allies over his handling of the negotiations.

PLO sources said Mr. Arafat called for an emergency meeting of the PLO Executive Committee after the latest blast of criticism.

The sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said committee member Mahmoud Abbas — who signed the accord with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in Washington on Sept. 13 — had expressed his discontent over Mr. Arafat's handling of the negotiations.

If their reports are correct, Mr. Abbas would be the highest-ranking PLO official to challenge Mr. Arafat over the agreement since it was signed more than six weeks ago. Earlier in the day, Mr. Arafat also met with two Israeli envoys in a fresh effort to end the deadlock in negotiations

over Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

PLO officials imposed a total news blackout on the visit by the two Israelis, one of whom was identified earlier as Jacques Neriah, a diplomatic adviser to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The second envoy was not identified.

No details of the meeting were released.

Before the Executive Committee gathered, Sulaiman Najjab, a veteran committee member, said he was boycotting the discussions, which he described as "useless."

Mr. Najjab, who leads of the Palestinian People's Party — the former communists — accused Mr. Arafat of making decisions alone, without consulting the committee.

"As past experience has shown it is useless to take part in these meetings, whose resolutions are totally ignored by the chairman of the Executive Committee (Arafat)," Mr. Najjab said in a statement he telefaxed to the Associated

Press.

He said he would not rejoin the committee before a set of demands he and other PLO officials made to Mr. Arafat earlier this month were acted on.

These include the involvement of more people in decision-making and better performance in negotiations with Israel.

Tuesday's meeting was also boycotted by Mahmoud Ismail, another member of the 18-man committee and leader of the pro-Iraq Arab Liberation Front. The group opposes the peace deal with Israel.

A third member, Bishop Eliya Khoury, is believed to be ill and has not been attending the committee's meeting for several months.

Six other members resigned after Mr. Arafat signed the peace agreement.

PLO sources said Mr. Arafat on Tuesday received a letter from Nabil Amr, a close aide, protesting his high-handed leadership and resigning all his posts in the PLO.

Palestinian youth throw stones at Israeli soldiers in Ramallah Tuesday (AFP photo)

Israel, PLO strike deal to calm Gaza tensions

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) struck a deal to try to cool the explosive situation in Gaza where troops shot 80 Palestinians Tuesday, a Fateh leader said.

The accord came after senior army officers twice met top members of the mainstream PLO movement Fateh after trouble erupted in response to an Israeli crackdown on activists the AFP said.

"There is an agreement on the practical steps that the Israeli authorities and the army must take to cool the situation down," said Sufian Abu Zaydah, a member of the Fateh "high committee" in Gaza.

"We hope to see these steps carried out in the coming days," he said after the talks, which the Israeli defence ministry called after Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin urged the army to "calm things down."

Mr. Abu Zaydah and five other Fateh officials met Israeli's southern region military commander General Matan Vilnai and senior officers at the Erez checkpoint into the Gaza Strip.

"We talked about the problem of the arrests in recent days and the broader question of Palestinian prisoners," he said, but refused what steps would be taken.

Military officials said they refused a demand for the release of Tayseer Bardini, the

chief of Fateh's armed wing, who was captured on Monday. Mr. Abu Zaydah had earlier met several army officers in the military administration headquarters in Gaza City.

Israel has given an amnesty to some Hawks but Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, who is close to Mr. Rabin, told Israeli radio the fight against them was not over.

Mr. Ben-Eliezer said Israel would "continue to pursue and to catch, whether in battle or a physical fight, every guerrilla and fugitive with bloody hands."

Thousands of Palestinians burned tyres and threw stones and fire-bombs at soldiers protesting at the army's killing on Sunday of a member of PLO chairman Yasser Arafat's Fateh Hawks and the capture of the group's commander on Monday.

"We will continue military action until our leader Tayseer Bardini is released and until Israel stops pursuing us," said Salim Muwafi, a senior Hawk who escaped arrest Monday.

Fateh activists, outraged by the latest army actions, have vowed to renew armed attacks against Israelis and ordered a three-day mourning strike throughout the Gaza Strip.

Just two weeks before the army is due to start withdrawing from the territory under the Sept. 13 autonomy deal, soldiers opened fire in Khan Yunis, Gaza City and the refugee camps of Jabalia, Shatti

and Maghazi. Palestinian sources said 80 people were shot and wounded. In Rafah camp, a 12-year-old boy lost an eye when he was hit by a rubber bullet, one of five youths critically hurt, doctors said.

Three border guards were lightly hurt as teenagers confronted patrols with rocks and Molotov cocktails, army officials said. Most roads were blocked and black smoke from hundreds of burning tyres clouded the sky.

In Paris, Mr. Rabin voiced regret at the violence and determination to press on with the peace process. He ordered the army to "calm things down," Israel Radio reported.

But left-wing Israeli deputy Dedi Zucker told AFP that the army was "totally losing control."

"The army is involved in a vendetta," charged Mr. Zucker of the Meretz party, a government coalition partner. "Any officer in an undercover unit has become a decision-maker and they are totally cut off from the peace process."

Witnesses said soldiers fired indiscriminately at anything that moved. One witness said he saw 15 people hit by plastic or rubber-coated bullets.

Jerome Delay, chief photographer of the Associated Press, was hit in the leg by a rubber bullet while covering the demonstrations in Khan

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Security Council short of consensus on Iraq sanctions

Clinton wants embargo maintained

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — U.N. Security Council members are at odds over lifting an oil embargo on Iraq, which recently accepted long-term monitoring of its disarmament programme, diplomats said.

Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States, the council's permanent members, are short of a consensus on the next step to take regarding Iraq, largely because of Washington's insistence on keeping the pressure on Baghdad, diplomats said after a closed-door meeting of the council late Monday.

Iraqi and U.N. officials announced Friday that Baghdad had accepted U.N. Resolution 715 on long-term monitoring of its chemical, nuclear and armament programmes, removing a major obstacle to lifting the U.N. embargo on Iraq's oil sales that was imposed after it occupied Kuwait in August 1990.

U.S. President Bill Clinton sent Congress a letter Monday advising that current sanctions be maintained against Iraq "because we believe that (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein is committed to rebuilding his weapons of mass destruction capability" and keeping it hidden from U.N. inspectors.

"Inspections and sanctions have significantly debilitated Iraq's ability to reconstitute its weapons of mass destruction... it is therefore extremely important that the international com-

munity maintain current sanctions," Mr. Clinton said.

U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright told reporters, "The United States wants to make absolutely sure that the Iraqis are abiding by the Security Council resolutions."

"We have said the same thing over and over again. We're looking for a sustained pattern of behaviour," she added.

Ms. Albright and other permanent members of the council were briefed by Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of scrapping Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

France has said it would agree eventually to lifting the embargo if UNSCOM deems it had completed its work. China is known to have a similar position. Britain and Russia are more cautious but envoys said they recognised that Iraq's formal acceptance of the monitoring constituted progress.

"The Americans are being tougher than anyone else," said one envoy at the council briefing.

"One has to recognise the monitoring was a positive step as we have been asking for it so let them get on with implementing it," he added. "One cannot always say that whatever the Iraqis do is wrong."

If Mr. Ekeus sometime next year says he is satisfied all weapons have been found and the monitoring programme is

in place, the council is obligated to consider lifting the embargo on Iraqi exports, including oil.

Other demands, stemming from a 1991 Gulf war ceasefire resolution, are linked to sanctions on imports to Iraq.

Former President George Bush once said he would not lift or ease sanctions while President Saddam was in office. President Clinton has not repeated this, which left Washington open to flouting U.N. resolutions which it helped write. But he appears to be taking a similar stand.

"Although Iraq has said that it is ready to comply with Resolution 715, it still must take significant steps, including the provision of new data about the suppliers of its WMD (weapons of mass destruction) programme," Mr. Clinton wrote.

Mr. Ekeus has told Iraq that it must establish a clear record of compliance before he can report favourably to the Security Council.

"We strongly support this approach," the president said. His remarks were contained in a report he must send to congressional leaders every 60 days on efforts to obtain Iraqi compliance with U.N. resolutions.

Mr. Clinton also faulted Iraq for its continued refusal to sell \$1.6 billion in oil, a step authorised by the Security Council.

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Libya on Libya will have limited effect

By Elie Austa
Agence France Presse

NICOSIA — New U.N. sanctions against Libya which take effect Wednesday will have a limited effect on the country's main source of revenue, diplomats and economists say.

"Libyans have had plenty of time to see" back their assets and transfer them to other countries under "pseudonyms," one diplomat said.

A European ambassador contacted from Cyprus said it would not be easy to "paralyse" European factories partly owned by Libyans.

The U.N. Security Council on Nov. 11 ordered a freeze on Libyan assets abroad and an embargo on deliveries of oil-related equipment to take effect on Dec. 1.

The new sanctions come on top of a ban on air traffic and arms sales imposed to force Libya to hand over two suspects wanted by the United States and Britain over the bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in December 1988. The bombing killed 270 people.

Prices had increased dramatically in Libya since the United Nations slapped an air and arms embargo on the country April 1992. The European ambassador in Tripoli said, "Certain subsidised goods are hard to find and the dinar is

only worth 50 cents on the open market against three dollars at the official rate," he explained.

An Arab economist meanwhile said Libya lacked the financial and agricultural resources of a country such as Iraq, and the new sanctions would eventually affect the Libyans' standard of living and "exacerbate the chaos."

In the run-up to the December deadline Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi has delivered vitriolic speeches to crowds of Libyans, reaffirming his refusal to hand over the two suspects.

On Friday he again vowed never to bow to international pressure to hand them over for trial.

He said the Lockerbie affair was "only a pretext to make the Libyan people bend," and Tripoli was prepared to confront the West for decades and even set fire to its oil wells.

The impact of the new sanctions may be limited in the short term because the freeze on Libyan assets abroad, estimated at between \$4 and \$5 billion, will be hard to implement, with little to distinguish individual from state deposits, diplomats say.

The Nicosia-based newsletter Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) said countries where the Libyan company Olinvest had handed over most of its capital to European partners would find it hard to

freeze the assets, held by subsidiaries in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Spain and Hungary.

However, Tripoli will be deprived of dividends on its investments.

MEES said that besides assets transferred to the Gulf and Asia, Libya has stockpiled oil equipment listed in the new embargo.

In the medium and short term, "this equipment must be bought through intermediaries, and as with all embargoes, it will be accessible but will cost more," an oil expert said.

Offshore companies set up by Libyans in third countries have been importing banned goods into Libya since 1986, when U.S. high technology was first embargoed and Libyan assets in the United States were frozen.

Libyans in general "want to live in peace and finish with this conflict that complicates their lives," the European ambassador said.

"They fear what may happen since the spectre of the U.S. raid on their country in 1986 continues to haunt them," he added.

Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan ordered air raids on Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986 which killed 37 and injured 93, in retaliation for a bombing of a discotheque in West Berlin frequented by U.S. soldiers.

Olmert opposes Jerusalem 'concessions'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The new right-wing mayor of Jerusalem Ehud Olmert, opened his first city council meeting on Monday with an uncompromising message that concessions were not the key to peace in the Holy City of Arabs and Jews.

Teddy Kollek, mayor for 28 years before he was ousted in municipal elections this month, quit the council and in a farewell speech said he feared Mr. Olmert would upset delicate Arab-Jewish relations in the city.

"I do not accept the argument that compromise is the ultimate aim in every matter and on every subject," said Mr. Olmert, a parliament member of the hawkish opposition Likud Party.

"We must understand the desires and needs of the other side but it will not be possible to reach true peace at the price of concessions on the most basic core, the deepest and most essential element of our national existence," he said.

In current talks on Palestinian autonomy, negotiations on Jerusalem were put off for several years.

"I am worried about ideological trends and ideas in the new leadership that could harm the delicate fabric of relations between Arabs and Jews," said the white-haired Kollek, 82, dressed in a smart blue suit and tie.

Mr. Kollek, affiliated with the ruling Labour Party, worked tirelessly for Arab-Jewish coexistence during his administration.

Opposition members of the council said they feared Mr. Olmert would provoke the 150,000 Palestinian residents of the city by encouraging nationalist Jews to settle in Arab neighbourhoods, something Mr. Olmert has already condoned.

Mr. Olmert, 48, was elected on a campaign focused on Mr. Kollek's advanced age and by cutting a last-minute deal with leaders of the city's sizable ultra-orthodox Jewish population.

Mr. Olmert and orthodox council members quoted extensively from psalms and Jewish prayers at Monday's city council meeting.

Mindful of plans by Mr. Olmert's nationalist and religious coalition partners to try to expand Jewish settlement in Jerusalem, Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini, set up a shadow committee last week to monitor the Arab side of the city.

Alluding to Palestinian claims on the city, Mr. Olmert, 48, said that "peaceful relations between us and our neighbours will not take place unless they recognise our deep attachment as a nation to Jerusalem."

He said that a "correct balance" could enable "a form of political solution to our historic conflict with the Arab nations and the Palestinians."

"This balance can in no way be based on any denial of Jewish sovereignty over all Jerusalem," Mr. Olmert added.

"I do not accept the argument that compromise is the ultimate aim in every matter and on every subject," he said.

Still, Mr. Olmert pledged to safeguard religious freedom and said Israel's "most cultivated, tolerance and consideration of the non-Jewish residents of our city," he said Arabs should be helped to "further their quality of life."

Ban on non-kosher meat saved Rabin

TEL AVIV (AP) — A proposed ban on importing non-kosher meat into Israel saved Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's peace plan on Monday.

The main opposition Likud Party brought a motion of non-confidence based on the recent state of violence in the occupied territories. The Likud, joined by three smaller right-wing parties, says the violence demonstrates that the Sept. 13 Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is a sham.

But it was easily defeated 48 to 33 with three abstentions. The remaining 36 legislators were not present.

Israel Radio reported that two small ultra-religious parties, United Torah Judaism and Agudat Yisrael, abstained or sit out the vote in exchange for a cabinet decision Sunday to legislate against the importation of non-kosher meat.

The governing Labour Party and its junior coalition party, Meretz, command 56 seats out of 120 in Israel's parliament. They are guaranteed the support of five other legislators who belong to Arab parties, giving the government a narrow majority of 61.

But Mr. Rabin has said he wants to see peace-related votes pass by a wide margin to give the process credibility and clear the way for further negotiations.

Shas and United Tora control 10 seats, which will keep Mr. Rabin in the clear if they abstain.

A legislative ban was unnecessary until Mr. Rabin announced plans to privatise the importation of meat this year. Government companies operating its strictly kosher but did not control all of the market.

The privatisation moves led religious parties to demand

that Mr. Rabin institutionalise the ban on non-kosher meat.

Mr. Rabin's cabinet banned the importation of non-kosher meat this summer, but the supreme court overturned the ban on appeal from importers and civil rights groups, saying it violated basic laws guaranteeing free trade.

Sunday's cabinet decision meant the government will introduce legislation in the coming months modifying the appropriate basic laws, which are formulated to serve as a de facto constitution and are less likely than ordinary laws to be overturned by the high court.

The end result will likely mean that small amounts of non-kosher meat currently entering the country without government supervision will be stopped.

It is still permitted to raise pork within Israel although religious parties are seeking a ban on this practice, as well.



FURY ERUPTS: A Palestinian holds stones as he prepares to attack Israeli forces in Gaza City Tuesday (see page one). At least 80 Palestinians were wounded in clashes which erupted after Israeli forces detained a leading Fatah activist (AFP photo)

Israeli army digs in for Gaza autonomy

By Barry Parker
Agence France Presse

KHAN YUNIS, occupied Gaza Strip — Four giant bulldozers rumble up and down levelling the sand dunes overlooking this Palestinian town in preparation for the Israeli army's redeployment on the Gaza Strip.

If the people of Khan Yunis thought the autonomy deal would rid them of the large army base on the edge of the refugee camp, they had a nasty shock last week.

Heavy equipment went to work swallowing up more acres by the neighbouring Jewish settlements of Gush Katif ahead of the army pull-back which is scheduled to start on Dec. 13.

Officially the army refuses to comment on what they are constructing, but it is at Gush Katif that the new general command centre is to be set up to protect the 4,000 settlers, military sources say.

"They started work last weekend," said carpenter Azmi Dasuki, whose home in the Al Ammal refugee overflow estate faces the plateau where the bulldozers labour.

"We have been waiting to get that land and now they have come and taken it over."

From his flat roof, the 30-year-old father of two surveys the old army base far to the south, Ganei Tal settlement to the north and the open dunes being flattened straight ahead.

"It will change our lives," fretted Mr. Dasuki. "We are already afraid for our children and now we will have the army on our doorstep 24 hours a day."

"If someone comes and shoots at the camp, when the troops fire back the most likely thing they will hit is my house. There will be many problems here now," he predicted.

On the plateau, a jeep-full of soldiers sits at point defending the bulldozers while a white army tent and Israeli flag are pitched in the far corner.

Scores of youngsters gather to watch the bulldozers, surging forward and pelting stones each time they with-

draw and running back when the machines advance.

Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are still arguing over the details of redeployment, but the army's broad intentions are clear.

Under the Sept. 13 agreement, the redeployment, which the army costs at up to \$200 million, is to be completed by April 13.

The army wants to withdraw to three heavily-fortified perimeters around the settlements in the north, centre and here in the south of the strip. Gush Katif is already surrounded by an electrified fence.

Observation posts will be erected at the settlements and along the coastline where naval patrols will be stepped up.

Eitan Haderi, who is in charge of security for Ganei Tal, told Friday's Yedioth Aharanot newspaper: "This week a senior official came and we fixed the sites where the posts should be built. Building has started."

The biggest selling daily quoted a senior military official as saying: "Redevelopment will be based on the following principles — maximum security for the Jewish population and settlement access roads, maximum control of the coastline and a minimum use of major roads."

The construction of the first eight-kilometre section of an \$80-million fence surrounding the territory has already begun.

Soldiers and military equipment have been pulled out of the largest military base in Gaza City and a post in the village of Abasan disappeared overnight on Nov. 22.

And two Palestinian "generals" toured Gaza with Israeli army escorts last week, a sure sign of the coming changes.

Military sources say that under the army's plan logistics units will begin withdrawing first from built-up Palestinian areas while fighting troops will pull out last.

But Khan Yunis looks set to remain in the shadow of the Israeli army at least for the five years of autonomous rule.

Freewheeling Israeli daily closes, citing poor sales

TEL AVIV (AP) — The publisher of Hadashot, a daily known for its irreverent style and bouts with military censors, said Monday the newspaper would shut down because of persistent losses.

Amos Schocken told army radio he concluded "there was no reason to continue" after years of low circulation and declining advertising revenues.

"Hadashot did important things in Israel, but when I weigh the situation as a businessman and not a journalist, one can say that I failed," he said. "It's a sad day for me."

Although Mr. Schocken refused to give figures, the radio put the tabloid's circulation at only 10,000 and said losses in its nearly 10 years of publication were estimated at \$20 million.

When Hadashot was launched in 1984 it was perceived as a lighter, somewhat populist alternative to the established evening dailies, Yedioth Aharnoth and Maariv, which have circulations estimated at more than 150,000.

An irreverent style marked by short, punchy captions and use of Hebrew slang set Hadashot apart. It was also the

first daily to use colour and emphasise easily readable graphics and layout.

"Readers will miss the youthful air and extreme anti-establishment stance," said columnist Amnon Dankner.

In its first year of publication, the paper was shut down for several days by Israel's military censor after it published pictures of two Palestinians being led away alive from the scene of a deadly attack by security forces.

The pictures sparked an investigation of the circumstances of their eventual death in custody. Subsequent disclosures of a cover-up by the Shin Bet security police caused a national scandal and resulted in new regulations governing interrogations.

Hadashot was again ordered shut down after it failed to submit two articles on military personnel decisions in 1988, but the decision was reversed the same day after editors apologised.

The paper's seeming disrespect for institutions appeared to harm its chances to win a mass market in a country where there is strong respect for the army and security issues.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PLO stakes Gaza land claim

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has put advertisements in Palestinian daily newspapers here warning Gazans that all land vacated by the Israeli army will fall under its control. "No citizen may buy, sell or make changes on any part of the properties and any such deals will be considered void by the time that national authority arrives," the ads said. The Israeli army is scheduled to start a four-month withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho from Dec. 13 under the autonomy accord. Elections to an autonomy council are due to be held on July 13 to enable the Palestinians to run their daily affairs.

"The PLO will take control of these lands at that time," read the ads. "All lands registered in the name of the governor of Gaz and falling under the occupation authorities' control since 5-June, 1967 are the property of the Palestinian people. Thousands of Palestinians live in 'illegal' slums on 'state land' in Gaza where the Israeli army regularly demolishes some of the homes.

Group says Egypt suppressing foreign press

CAIRO (R) — A human rights group has accused the Egyptian government of suppressing the freedom of journalists working for foreign news organisations. "The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights (EOHR) has recently received many complaints which indicate that the foreign press in Egypt is falling under the same pressures which limit the freedom of opinion, expression and the press in the country as a whole," the group said in its faxed report. EOHR highlighted the pressures exerted on Egyptians working for foreign news organisations in Cairo. "In most cases correspondents called in for investigations are threatened by the state security to confiscate their press credentials, especially if they were Egyptians, to force them... to reveal sources or to prevent them from criticising the government and its policies," it said. It said some correspondents "were physically attacked by security men and their notes and other material confiscated." It said journalists interviewed by EOHR, both foreigners and Egyptians, said the security bodies had bugged their phones, limited their movement and blocked their access to information or ability to publish news they had obtained. "Bugging telephone lines allows security bodies to reveal the sources which the foreign press depend on and to subject these sources to threats, pressures and sometimes physical attacks," the report said.

U.S. forces boarded Iraq-bound freighter

MANAMA (AFP) — U.S. naval forces enforcing a U.N. embargo boarded a Cypriot freighter carrying 13,000 tonnes of sugar before letting it sail to the Iraqi Gulf port of Umm Qasr. U.S. Navy officials said Monday. The vessel, the first to transport cargo to an Iraqi port since the Gulf war of January-February 1991, was boarded Thursday, the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command said in a statement received here. "The Tephys was inspected by the U.S. destroyer Elliott and was allowed to proceed to Umm Qasr after the inspection revealed it was only carrying its declared cargo of sugar," it said. The arrival of the Tephys in Umm Qasr Friday marked the reactivation of Iraqi Gulf ports. On Sunday Baghdad said the ports were ready to accept imports of goods not banned by the U.N. embargo imposed on Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The Cypriot freighter arrived on the Iraqi side of Umm Qasr, divided by the new Iraq-Kuwait border drawn up by the United Nations in April 1992. "Iraqi imports will henceforth arrive directly at Iraqi ports, and that will reduce transport costs," Commerce Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh told the government daily Al Jumhuriyah.

Sentencing hearing set Dec. 6 in Iraq case

ATLANTA (AP) — Christopher Drogoul, once accused of making \$3.5 billion in illegal loans to Iraq, will be sentenced next week on wire fraud and regulatory violations, a federal judge said Monday. U.S. District Judge G. Ernest Tidwell scheduled a sentencing hearing to begin Dec. 6. Lawyers said they expect the hearing to last all week. Mr. Drogoul pleaded guilty in September to one count of wire fraud and two counts of making false statements to bank regulators. The plea came six days before he was to go on trial on a 70-count indictment charging he masterminded the international loan scandal. The other charges against Mr. Drogoul were dismissed after he pleaded guilty. At a preliminary hearing Monday, defence attorney Robert Simels urged Mr. Tidwell to sentence Mr. Drogoul under guidelines that would allow the judge to limit prison time to the 20 months already served by Mr. Drogoul. Prosecutors want Mr. Drogoul sentenced under guidelines allowing a prison term of up to 6 1/2 years. Mr. Drogoul, the former Atlanta branch manager of Italy's state-owned Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL), is currently being held in the Atlanta federal penitentiary. Mr. Drogoul has maintained his loans to Iraq were authorised by top BNL officials in Rome and were consistent with U.S. policy towards Iraq at the time.

U.S. council renews mandate of Golan force

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The Security Council unanimously approved Monday a six-month renewal, until May 31, 1994, of a force which keeps peace between Syria and Israel. The council extended the U.N. Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), which for the past 19 years has served as a buffer between the Syrian and Israeli armies on the Golan Heights. The 1,115-member force, comprising contingents from Austria, Canada, Finland and Poland, was established to monitor a troop disengagement agreement that followed the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. UNDOF's commander is Major-General Roman Misztal of Poland.

Mortar explosion kills 5 in Iran

NICOSIA (AP) — Five children were killed when an unexploded mortar shell they were playing with went off, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported Tuesday. The agency said the mortar exploded Monday after the children lit a fire around it. The accident occurred in the eastern Lorestan province. IRNA said it was unknown how the children, aged from 8 to 15, got hold of the shell.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 731111

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30	Only
18:00	Sports N.B.A.
19:00	News in French
19:15	Le Journal De L'Histoire
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Head of the Class
21:10	"The World"
21:00	News in English
22:00	"All Murder Do's Part"

AYER TIMES

16:31	Fair
16:35	Sunrise, Puka
16:40	16:40
16:45	16:45
16:50	16:50

CHURCHES

St. George's Church of the Holy Spirit, Tel. 637440

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624540

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 601757

Lourdes Church Tel. 622306

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

Anglican Church Tel. 626851, Tel. 628433

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 731311

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 731311

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 731751

Armenian International Church Tel. 625279

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684988

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 649032

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675901

Min. Max Temp

Amman	16
Jericho	16
Dead Sea	17
Jordan Valley	15

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 14, Jericho 14, Dead Sea 14, Jordan Valley 14

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

Amman 25 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Jamil Tarif 794710

Dr. Abbas Al-Hakim 804446

Dr. Shabaneh Al-Tech 753774

Dr. Faysal Al-Dabbas 791655

Firco pharmacy 661912

Ferlous pharmacy 778336

Al-Awami pharmacy 637055

Natruski pharmacy 626672

Al-Salam pharmacy 637703

Yacoub pharmacy 649445

Shimoun pharmacy 657668

Natruski pharmacy 626672

Najih pharmacy 827632

IRBID:

Dr. Ali Al-Omar 272032

Al-Qus Pharmacy 771031

ZARQA:

Dr. Hussein Al-Haji 984344

Khalifah pharmacy 984317

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Rescue 637777

Fire Brigade 637121

Blood Bank 75121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality 787111

Civil Defence Department 637111

Police 637111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 661100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815015

Electric Power 636381

Flight Information 16-5320

HOSPITALS

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 16-5320

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 81301323

Khalid Maternity J. Amn. 642816

Akileh Maternity J. Amn. 642412

Jabal Amman Maternity 642462

Malhas J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmouni 661714

Amal Hospital 855635

University Hospital 6672279

Al-Muhsen Hospital 6612737

Al-Ahli, Abdull 661646

Shmoun Hospital 661131

Al-Bashir J. Ashrafieh 771013

Arms, Amman 8916115

Queen Alia Hospital 6023050

Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09983523

Zarqa Modern Hospital 09986540

Im Sima Hospital 09986732

Al-Hana Modern Hospital 09986900

Princess Bana Hospital 09975554

Green Catholic Hospital 09972275

In Al-Nakel Hospital 09971800

QADIAH

Princess Haya Hospital 09934117

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 0843204, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

08:00	Aqaba (RJ)
08:35	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:00	Jeddah (RJ)
09:15	London (RJ)
10:30	Amman (RJ)
11:00	Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:25	Cairo (RJ)
12:00	Columbo (RJ)
12:20	Riyadh (RJ)
12:30	New Delhi (RJ)
12:45	Aden (RJ)
13:00	Aqaba (RJ)
13:15	Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
13:30	Saita (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:05	Rome (AZ)
05:35	Cairo (MS)
06:30	Jeddah (SA)
10:30	Sana'a (Y)
12:25	Abu Dhabi, Dubai (GF)
14:35	Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PI)
16:15	Paris, Damascus (AF)
18:45	Beirut (ME)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:30	Aqaba (RJ)
07:30	Rome (AZ)
08:15	Amman (RJ)
08:30	Berlin, London (RJ)
11:00	Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:25	Cairo (RJ)
12:00	Columbo (RJ)
12:20	Riyadh (RJ)
12:30	New Delhi (RJ)
12:45	Aden (RJ)
13:00	Aqaba (RJ)
13:15	Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
13:30	Saita (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:05	Beirut, Paris (AF)
06:25	Rome (AZ)
08:15	Beirut (ME)
08:30	Cairo (MS)
11:30	Sana'a (Y)
12:00	Jeddah (SA)
13:30	Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PI)

HUAI RAILWAY TRAIN

Upper/lower price in lils per kg

Apple	700/800
Banana	600
Banana (Mukammar)	620
Beans	720/800
Carrot	130/180
Cauliflower	250/300
Clementine	200/250
Cucumbers (large)	200/250
Cucumbers (small)	250/300
Eggplant	250/300
Garlic	250/300
Grapes	600/500
Green Fruit	100/120
Lemon	180/200
Lemon (green)	200/250
Marrow (large)	250/300
Marrow (small)	450/500
Mulakhia	600/500
Onion (green)	500/300
Orange	400/300
Onion (dry)	300/250
Onion (green)	250/200
Pepper (hot)	250/200
Pepper (sweet)	180/200
Potato	270/300
Tomato	400/200
Splach	200/180

هذه احدى الصور

Crown Prince calls for planning youth activities via closer interaction with social dimensions

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday said that sports and youth activities should be closely linked to and interact with social dimensions and not be planned from behind desks, inside closed offices.

"We cannot continue raising the slogan 'the human person is our most precious possession' at a time when our knowledge about that person is superficial because of our total divorce from reality and actual situations," he said.

The Crown Prince was addressing the winners of the Crown Prince Golden Award for outstanding activities in voluntary fields during 1993.

Youth activities that can achieve their specific objectives are those which originate with the young people themselves, free of any bureaucratic constraints or limitations, or coming from offices far from the real situation on the ground, said Prince Hassan.

The winners of the Golden Award have had sufficient opportunities to identify and get to know the land as well as the people living in this land thanks to their interaction with the various social sectors during their competition for the Golden Award, said Prince Hassan.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday addresses winners of the Crown Prince Golden Award (Petra photo)

It is hoped that the winners would form a nucleus of a larger group of youth to be involved in a wider youth movement in Jordan, he added.

The Crown Prince proposed the formation of an association of the winners of the Golden

Award "if such an association can play a basic role in promoting the values and objectives of the Crown Award and in stimulating youth activities in voluntary and social fields."

He urged the group to maintain contacts with the other participants and winners of the

award to achieve this purpose. The winners of the 1993 Golden Award are 24 youths who were awarded their certificates by Prince Hassan on Nov. 21. The group brings to 93 the total number of young men and women who have received the Golden Award to date.

Visiting high-level U.S. defence officials to reaffirm security commitments, explore possible collective arrangement

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A high-level U.S. Defence Department delegation began a visit to Jordan as part of a Middle East mission described by Washington as aimed at reaffirming long-standing U.S. security commitments to the region and exploring possibilities of a collective arrangement for security.

The delegation, led by Frank Wisner, assistant secretary of defence, was expected to be received by His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali and other senior government leaders.

On Tuesday, the team was received by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Abdul Hafez Mira'i Al Kaabneh, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

The agency said Gen. Kaabneh and the visitors exchanged views on "the situation in the region" and discussed "means of cooperation and coordination." It did not give details. Briefing reporters on the delegation's 13-day trip to the Middle East, a senior Pentagon official said last week that the region's countries needed "to hear directly from the new administration about the importance the U.S. attaches to them."

Officials said the objective of the visit was to explore ways and means to translate the reality of the end of the cold war and progress in the Middle East peace process into collective arrangements to counter potential security threats to the region's countries as well as U.S. interests.

One of the key Jordanian ideas in this context is Crown Prince Hassan's proposal for a conference on Middle East security along the lines of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The proposal, which envisages a nuclear-free Middle East zone, implies the exposure of the arsenals of the countries of the region, a prospect that Israel, believed to possess nuclear weapons among its vast military machine, has repeatedly dismissed.

In general terms, the mission's goal, as described by the Pentagon official, is to set the stage for a "new era of coop-

eration with a region that we have long determined is vital to U.S. national interests."

The discussions the delegation will have with the leaders of Jordan, Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states will focus on the planned restructuring of U.S. defence forces announced by Defence Secretary Les Aspin in mid-September.

European military experts noted that with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the defence treaties that the U.S. has already signed with Kuwait and other Gulf states, Washington could now afford to reduce its physical military presence in the Middle East.

That is one of the main regional impacts of the restructuring announced by Mr. Aspin.

The delegation will review "strategic requirements as well as current and future security threats" in the Middle East.

According to the Pentagon official, the delegation was to urge Middle Eastern leaders to "establish priorities in ways that make sense, not only for their own defence but in terms of mutual cooperation in the region."

Inter-operability of equipment and doctrines and possibly the prepositioning of troops and material in the region could be the means to achieve this end, the official said.

Depending on the results of the delegation's mission, the official said, "a new era of cooperation" could emerge.

The mission is not expected to produce any new treaties, mutual defence pacts, or announcements about military assistance.

The delegation includes Ted E. Warner, assistant secretary of state of defence for strategy, requirements and resources, Frances D. Cook, deputy assistant secretary of state for regional security affairs and security assistance, Molly Williamson, deputy assistant secretary of defence for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs, and Rear Admiral John Michael Leucke, director of plans and policies of the U.S. Central Command.

Mr. Wisner is a former ambassador who served in Egypt and the Philippines.

Ms. Williamson, as the U.S. consul general in Arab East Jerusalem until last year,

Envoy highlights Romania's progress, ties with Jordan, in marking holiday

By Ica Wahbeh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Romania's National Day today (Wednesday) assumes a special significance as it has reached the venerable age of three quarters of a century.

Marked on Dec. 1, it celebrates the "great union" of Transylvania with the mother country, in 1918, after years of occupation by the Austro-Hungarian empire.

At a press conference Saturday, Romanian Ambassador to Jordan Anton Pascale reviewed the historical events that led to the much sought after and fought for union, long the dream of a people whose political, military, economic and spiritual ties ensured the national identity of a people who could not be kept apart by artificial borders.

"The anniversary of 75 years since the great union is also an occasion for us to celebrate the progress the country has registered in democratising the political and social life, the passage to the market economy and attaining industrial restructuring based on the principles of economic efficiency and utilisation of natural and human resources and of a more proficient Romanian integration in the world economy," said Mr. Pascale.

A contribution to this integration is made by the 1,700 Jordanian-Romanian firms operating in Romania, said the ambassador, adding that the volume of bilateral commercial exchange in 1992 was 50 per cent higher than that of 1991.

The Romano-Jordanian relationship is an old one, it goes back to the ambassadorial level, to 1965. In 1968 the two countries signed a trade and cooperation agreement, and ever since, the ties were reinforced by more treaties and visits at all levels.

As recent as last month, Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz visited Romania to attend the 10th meeting of the joint Economic and Technical Cooperation Committee. Two documents were signed on the occasion: the Protocol of the 10th Session and the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement, paving the way for the development of future economic ties.

The minister was accompanied by representatives of various ministries and economic organisations dealing with electricity, phosphates, and potash, and representatives of the Chambers of Industry and Commerce including 12 individual firms.

This attests to the seriousness of the relations between the two countries and to the potential of the Romanian market to absorb increasing amounts of Jordanian products, said Mr. Pascale.

In 1992, the volume of bilateral economic exchange was worth \$53 million, while in the first 10 months of 1993 it reached \$40 million.

The main imports from Romania are meat and livestock, timber, metallurgical products, natural and synthetic fibres, textiles, chemical products, cars, tyres, electric

appliances, tools, china and home utensils.

Jordanian exports to Romania went beyond the traditional phosphate, rising from a mere \$0.5 million in 1991 to \$4.4 million in 1992 and reaching, for the first 10 months of this year, \$4.5 million. The imports from Jordan include vegetables, citrus fruit, medicine, sweets, textiles and plastic products.

An important role in diversifying the bilateral relations is played by the mixed Romanian-Jordanian firms and the private sector in Jordan, 1,000 representatives of which visited Romania in 1992.

Romanian contributions to economic projects in the Kingdom include the Zarqa refinery, installation of electric grids, oil pipes and drilling. Romanian companies

are bidding for projects related to storage oil tanks, chemical installations, electric power plants and high voltage electric grids.

"Despite unfavourable regional and international conditions, Romania has always proved an element of stability and peace in the Balkans, has integrated in the European structures and has promoted a policy of good neighbourhood," said Mr. Pascale.

At the same time, "a constant preoccupation is the development of relations with the Arab World, of which the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan represents a traditional and reliable friend of the Romanian people," added the envoy.

Queen inaugurates Cerebral Palsy Centre in Irbid

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor, the Honorary President of the Cerebral Palsy Foundation (CPF), Tuesday inaugurated the new Irbid Cerebral Palsy Centre.

The foundation had originally opened the Irbid Centre in 1985 at the Health Centre of Yarmouk University and the University of Science and Technology.

The new centre was financed by the CPF and the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) and the Municipality of Irbid donated the land on which it was built.

The CPF, established in 1977, aims at reducing the prevalence of cerebral palsy in Jordan from its current level of five per 1,000 births to one per 1,000 births.

The foundation has assisted over 7,000 children at its centre in six cities: Amman, Zarqa, Karak, Irbid, Aqaba and Salt.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday inaugurates the New Cerebral Palsy Centre in Irbid (Petra photo)

Expansion plans are also underway to develop two more centres in Mafrq and Tafleh to meet the needs of those areas.

The Irbid centre will provide medical treatment and physiotherapy in addition to a general education programme to an estimated 1,020 children.

Queen Noor, accompanied

conducting a family planning tour in Jordan.

The Population Institute is an international educational non-profit organisation with members in over 159 countries.

It aims to make population issues an international priority by increasing awareness of the population problem in relation to resource and environmental constraints and by developing action programmes to reduce world overpopulation.

Queen Noor spoke at the Population Institute in Washington D.C. last year about Jordanian and regional population issues.

The Queen had extended an invitation to members of the institute's staff to visit Jordan. The visiting group is conducting a study of Jordan's population planning and development policies in preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in Cairo in 1994.

Ministry unveils loan plan

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Agriculture Tuesday unveiled a plan to help farmers diversify their sources of income and boost their livestock production. The plan has been submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval, according to the Ministry.

The \$19.6 million plan, expected to be implemented at the start of 1994, entails granting soft loans to up to 8,000 small farmers to help them carry out land development of livestock projects in the rural regions, according to the announcement made by Agriculture Minister Marwan Kamal Monday.

The loans would finance the purchase of goats, sheep and cows to boost dairy production and therefore increase the concerned farmers' income, said the minister.

With this project, which is to be implemented over a period of seven years, we hope to

raise the living standard of poor families especially those whose bread-winners are women, said Dr. Kamal.

The project also entails helping and encouraging women farmers to increase their field production by providing them with loans to finance the purchase of seeds and animal feed and build water storage facilities to irrigate crops and increase cereal production, the minister continued.

He said that part of the allocated sums will finance the expansion of stations located at Wadi Waleh, Dhiban, Khanair and Mafrq districts which serve to improve the quality of livestock raised in the country.

The loans will be short-term and medium-term loans, depending on the nature of the projects and the types of crops to be produced and will partly cover the cost of purchasing farming equipment, Dr. Kamal added.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Second Jordanian exhibition of cotton and woollen products at the World Exhibition Hall — University Road (11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.)
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Palestine Throughout History" at the University of Jordan.
- ★ Exhibition of handicrafts at the University of Amman.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Farhadi Abdel Hafiez at the Balka Art Gallery in Al Fubeis (10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 720902).
- ★ Exhibition of ceramics by Iraqi artist Scham Saoudi at Alfa Art Gallery (9:00-13:30 and 15:00-18:00) (Tel. 639303).
- ★ Photographic exhibition on the infatigable at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation (8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.).
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Hammoud Shantout at Baladna Art Gallery (Gardens Street).

FILMS & DRAMAS

- ★ Video film entitled "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner" at the British Council at 7:00 p.m. (104 minutes).
- ★ Drama in Arabic entitled "The Precious Lady" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 5:00 p.m.

Officials seize 40 artefacts

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanian customs officers Tuesday said they aborted an attempt to smuggle 40 pieces of artefacts unearthed in Jordan out of the country and delivered the items to the Department of Antiquities.

The 40 pieces, which included marble, pottery and metal works excavated from several historic sites in Jordan, were hidden in three wooden crates among bolts of cloth exported to Germany aboard a truck, said Khaled Outob, director of the Amman Customs Office, who made the announcement.

"We turned over the three crates with their contents to the Department of Antiquities since the law bans the trading and export of Jordanian antiquities," said Mr. Outob.

Department of Antiquities Director General Safwan Tell said that among the crates' contents, the department found a white marble statue representing the God of Wisdom in ancient Greece, dating back to the second and third centuries B.C. and a set of 27 pieces of pottery, several jars, lanterns and plates all dating back to the Bronze Age or 3,000 B.C.

The rest of the pieces date back to Roman, Byzantine and Islamic periods and a plate of mosaics from the Byzantine Age, according to Dr. Tell.

He said the Department of Antiquities has the authority to confiscate these pieces to be stored and displayed in the country's national museums.

Dr. Tell thanked the Customs Department for its coop-

eration. Mr. Outob said that the priceless merchandise was found loaded on a truck with a Bulgarian licence plate, the vehicle was transporting Jordanian cloth destined for German markets.

He told the Jordan Times that the truck and the cloth were seized pending investigations into the case.

He said that the driver of the truck had to stop at the customs complex south of Amman in order to obtain clearance for travel to Germany, and it was then that customs officers discovered the three crates which were not among the items listed on the truck's manifest.

When questioned about the three crates the driver, who is Bulgarian, expressed surprise, said Mr. Outob.

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Margaret Thatcher The Downing Street Years



Sold at: The Masterpieces (Majdawi Bookshop)
Abdali-Tel: 658859

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CHRISTMAS CHARITY BAZAAR
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3TH
11 AM TO 4 PM
MARRIOTT HOTEL

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WITH OVER 50 PRIZES

TOYS - BALLOONS - HOUSEHOLD ITEMS - DECORATED SHIRTS

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CARAMEL, POPCORN - CANDY BASKETS

BOOKS - MAGAZINES - WHITE ELEPHANT

CHRISTMAS ARTICLES

WREATHS AND CANDLES

TREE SKIRTS - STOCKINGS

ORNAMENTS & DECORATIONS

WALL HANGERS - BASKETS

POT POURRI - DECORATIVE SOAPS

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A solid approach to a fluid problem

THE FIVE-DAY symposium on water that started Sunday is a timely event that aims to assess the water needs of the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa. The basic themes of the meeting speak for themselves as far as their interrelations and interdependence are concerned. Surely in the context of the Arab World one cannot discuss "water utilisation and efficiency" in isolation from "water resources, planning and development" or from "regional cooperation and coordination." The organic link between these three principal concerns of the water conference is clear to all those familiar with the water crisis in the Arab World.

Obviously there will come a time when regional cooperation would have to take into consideration, in addition to the Arab countries of the region, both Turkey and Israel; Turkey because it has tremendous water resources that can, under appropriate conditions and circumstances, help in solving the Middle East water problem; and Israel because its impact on the issue has so far been negative due to its encroachment on Arab water rights that led to substantial diminishing of the availability of water resources that are rightfully Arab. In this sense, positive Israeli cooperation in this field is necessary for any meaningful regional approach to the water problem in the region. No wonder one of the most sticking points in the Arab-Israeli peace talks centres on the water dimension. Israel is known to have diverted water resources even from the arid West Bank region in order to satisfy its own needs. This on top of Israel's illegal utilisation of waters from regional rivers or their tributaries, including the Jordan and the Yarmouk as well as the Litani.

In Jordan, meanwhile, this is only one facet that led to the country's water crisis. When more than half of Jordan's production of water goes unaccounted for due principally to pipe leakage, illegal use or unmetered supplies, the extent of the local water problem becomes clearer. A working paper submitted to the symposium said 54 per cent of water supplies in Amman and Zarqa were unaccounted for. And when we take into consideration that the water use in the greater Amman and Zarqa region constitutes 54 per cent of the entire national use, the extent of the domestic problem and its contribution to the water crisis becomes clearer.

There is no sense in solving the water crisis on a regional basis or in terms of proper planning and development when we waste as much as half of our own water resources year after year.

And when it comes to planning, there is nothing simpler than encouraging landlords to construct water wells that can be filled by rain water collected from roof tops. This is the least costly method to save water and replenish the needs of our people in summer. Construction permits can be made conditional on the building of such wells. Even tax incentives can be introduced for this purpose. While we strive to restore our water rights and hope for regional plans that would satisfy the needs of all the states of the region, we should use the time from now until these hopes are realised to rationalise waste at home.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour daily Tuesday discussed the question of Jordanian's obtaining visas to visit their relatives and friends in other Arab countries and said that it is a very complicated process, causing much frustration to the majority of the applicants. Mohammad Kawash said that citizens from the Gulf countries are offered all facilities when they wish to visit Jordan and find no difficulty in obtaining a visa. Likewise, the foreign nationals who come here find no difficulty at all in making the trip as the visa is promptly issued to them on the spot, added the writer. Perhaps the Jordanian government believes that facilitating the issuance of visas to these visitors is part of the policy of attracting tourists to Jordan, but in fact tourism is not progressing and it can only succeed once the essential services for the tourists have been made available, as the majority of people know, added the writer. He said that the government should deal with the foreign nationals on equal terms and should reciprocate their procedures concerning visits to their own countries by Jordanian citizens. He said that this demand is not aimed at creating problems for the visitors of Jordan, but rather to pressure the other governments to treat Jordanians in the same manner it treats non-Jordanians coming to the Kingdom.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily commented on Arbor Day celebrations in January, noting that the Ministry of Agriculture was preparing for the day when tree planting is to take place. Nazli said that previously, the government used to announce a public holiday for the Arbor Day, enabling as many people as possible to take part in the tree-planting practice and contribute to the afforestation of the country. The writer said that the ministry is planning to plant 100,000 trees in the national park, to be named Al Hussein National Park, on 1,200 dunums of a land, adding that millions of other trees would be planted in other areas, according to the ministry's plans and the current preparations. But he asked what would happen to those trees if the ministry does not come up with the proper means to ensure their growth.

Scandal unveils fraudulent arms procurement, funding Israeli intelligence

By Jane Hunter

SACRAMENTO CA. — The Rami Dotan scandal, a vast diversion of Israel's U.S. military aid which last summer seemed to have been brought under control, has reared up again. Now a second major U.S. military contractor, Pratt and Whitney, has acknowledged participating in fraudulent contracting schemes like those to which the General Electric Corporation (GE) pleaded guilty last year. And a congressman has disclosed that Israel is blocking a U.S. investigation of the aid diversion and trying to stop a plan to put military aid to Israel under direct Pentagon control.

In testimony before the House Committee on oversight and investigations late October, Richard C. Stienner, the director of special investigations for the General Accounting Office (GAO) recounted how, during the 1980s, Pratt and Whitney officials carried out a variety of fraudulent transactions with a group of Israelis under the direction of then air force procurement chief General Rami Dotan. Mr. Stienner made a strong case for the GAO's conclusion that both the company and the Israeli government knowingly abetted the embezzlement of Israel's U.S. military aid.

Rep. John Dingell, the Michigan Democrat who chairs the subcommittee, noted that Pratt and Whitney employed as a consultant the very man who laundered the U.S. aid funds diverted from contracts with G.E., Harold Katz. Mr. Katz is a dual U.S.-Israeli citizen whose official job is legal adviser to the Israeli Defence Ministry. The actual meaning of that job first came into question in 1987, when it became known that Mr. Katz's Washington apartment was used by the Israeli embassy to photocopy U.S. intelligence documents stolen by Jonathan Jay Pollard, now serving a life sentence for spying for Israel. In late 1990, when Israeli authorities, under U.S. pressure, began prosecuting Rami Dotan for diverting funds from G.E. contracts, they briefly detained Mr. Katz. Mr. Dotan was stripped of his rank and given a 13-year sentence.

Israel did not prosecute Mr. Katz, purportedly because he opted to become a government witness and identify the Swiss bank accounts through which he had laundered the diverted U.S. aid funds. But although it refunded \$6.2m to the U.S., Israel never provided Washington with a full account of Mr. Katz's money trail. And, as it had in the Pollard case, Israel refused to let U.S.

officials interrogate Mr. Katz. Mr. Katz's prominence in two major scandals apparently did not faze Pratt and Whitney, which retained him as a consultant throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, paying him a total of about \$250,000, according to Mr. Dingell. "Even after Pratt and Whitney knew that Mr. Katz was a major player in the Dotan scandal," it kept paying Mr. Katz until 1992, Mr. Dingell noted in opening remarks at the subcommittee hearings.

Between the mid-1980s and 1990, Pratt and Whitney participated in kickbacks and contract over-pricing involving over \$12m of Israel's U.S. aid, according to Mr. Stienner. In one scheme, Pratt and Whitney paid almost \$6.5m to two companies linked to Mr. Dotan, although the firms, Yrreco and Air Tech, had only one employee between them and performed less than \$600,000 worth of work filling orders for computer software.

An intelligence link

Benjamin Sonnenschein, who operated Yrreco and Air Tech, carried some of the balance in cash to Europe, where

it was deposited in accounts controlled by Mr. Katz, Mr. Dingell said. Sonnenschein noted the congressman was "an unemployed textile worker who later admitted he did not even know what software was". Mr. Sonnenschein pleaded guilty last year to currency and tax violations and returned \$2.8m to the U.S. government. Yrreco and Air Tech were created by Mr. Sonnenschein's relative, Yoram Ingbir, whose engineering firm played a major role in the fraudulent Israeli contracts with General Electric.

During the G.E. investigation Rep. Dingell voiced suspicion that the embezzled funds were being used to finance Israeli intelligence operations, a contention his staff repeated in interviews with Middle East International (MEI). Although Israel portrayed Mr. Dotan as a corrupt rogue who used his position to extort bribes, an internal memo leaked during the Bush administration contended that official Israeli involvement could not be ruled out.

The GAO believes that Israeli Defence Ministry officials were "aware of and facil-

tated the transactions" in the Pratt and Whitney case. Mr. Stienner testified last month. A GAO report submitted to Mr. Dingell quotes internal Pratt and Whitney correspondence saying that the company had "specific direction from (the Israeli air force), to make no mention of Israeli air force Yrreco connections... for security reasons."

The GAO also reported that Pratt and Whitney was instrumental in getting a job at Bet Shemesh Engines, an Israeli company 40 per cent owned by Pratt and Whitney, for Nechemin Oron, an Israeli air force officer who worked under Mr. Dotan directing the Yrreco and Air Tech contracts until he retired. Mr. Oron continued to handle the contracts in his new job at Bet Shemesh, according to the GAO.

Testifying at the hearings, Robert F. Daniel, the chairman of Pratt and Whitney's parent company, United Technologies Corporation, said that employees had not knowingly violated U.S. regulations. But a U.S. Justice Department official told the Associated Press anonymously that Pratt and Whitney was now under

investigation. However, the official said, the department has had difficulty speaking to Israeli officials.

Israel stone walls

That is an understatement. Even though the grant for its \$1.8 bn in annual U.S. military aid commits it to cooperating in investigations of fraud, Israel balked then negotiated for months before it agreed last June to allow U.S. officials to interview Mr. Dotan, Mr. Katz and Mr. Ingbir — through Israeli government minders. But, according to Rep. Dingell, when Justice Department investigators arrived in Israel, "they were unable to interview them". At the time, justice officials refused Middle East International request to provide information about how the investigators fared in Israel.

As a result of Israel's failure to cooperate, Mr. Dingell said, this year's grant agreement has not been signed. The 1992 grant was signed later, in October of that year, after Israel promised to "cooperate" with the corruption probe.

Also discussed at October's hearings was the Pentagon's plan to abolish the practice of

allowing military aid recipients to buy U.S.-funded weapons systems direct from U.S. manufacturers. Announced last June, the plan would have required all the aid to be spent through the Defence Department's Foreign Military Sales programme starting on Jan. 1. It was not just the Mr. Dotan scandal that prompted the switch. Pentagon audits turned up irregularities in procurements by several nations, among them Egypt. But the new rules would have fallen most heavily on Israel, which does most of its arms buying through its purchasing mission in New York, an office with a history of embezzlement in illegal arms export scandals.

"The new rules would have fallen most heavily on Israel, which does most of its arms buying through its purchasing mission in New York, an office with a history of embezzlement in illegal arms export scandals... The deputy director of the Pentagon's foreign aid office, told the subcommittee that the defence department had 'extended' the current programme until July 1, 1994. By then the purchasing mission might be hard at work procuring the new weapons President Clinton promised Yitzhak Rabin."

"Israel complained vociferously and the Senate blocked the (Pentagon's) action," recounted Rep. Dingell. Glenn A. Rudd, the deputy director of the Pentagon's foreign aid office, told the subcommittee that the Defence Department had "extended the current programme until July 1, 1994, while it 'consults' with aid recipients, Congress and other government agencies. By then the purchasing mission might be hard at work procuring the new weapons President Clinton promised Yitzhak Rabin at the beginning of November — Middle East International.

Is there more to John Major than homely greyness, Britons wonder?

By Peter Bale
Reuters

LONDON — Three years after replacing the towering figure of Margaret Thatcher as prime minister, John Major remains an enigma to colleagues and Britain's voters.

Ask what he stands for and few have a ready answer.

His prime characteristic is a homely greyness. A colleague once described him as "melting into the foreground".

Like the man, his policies have yet to make a deep impression on a British psyche on which "Thatcherism" — her brand of grocery-store economics and self-reliance — left an indelible imprint over 11 years of her rule.

"Majorism" has yet to emerge despite a few false starts.

"I will put it in a single phrase: the power to choose — and the right to own," he said of his beliefs three years ago.

His call for a "back to basics" return to individual responsibility and fundamental values has struck few chords and sits oddly with the prescription he offered when he took over on Nov. 28, 1990, promising "a nation at ease with itself".

On a one-to-one basis 50-year-old Major impresses with a direct gaze, patent honesty and an engaging manner. One biographer

said she found the former finance minister sexy.

In public, however, Mr. Major can come across as a real-life version of Chance the gardener played by Peter Sellers in the film "Being There", a simple man with a fondness for truisms who is catapulted into national politics.

"As we dine in white tie off gold plate other Londoners do not," Major told a gala dinner of London financiers this month.

But friends say there is more to Mr. Major than meets the eye.

"You don't get to be prime minister of this country by being a cardboard cut-out. You don't win an election if you are a cardboard cut-out. You don't continue in office if you are a cardboard cut-out," said one who has stood by Mr. Major during a dreadful 18 months since the April 1992 election.

Thatcher, allies say, had run her course and could never have won the April 1992 election as he did.

"He has done what the Conservative Party wants its leaders to do — win elections," one friend said. Mr. Major had a rotten introduction to the job. He inherited a recession, a row in his party over closer ties with the European Community and a public ready to ditch the government over a hated local government levy known as the "poll tax".

His key economic policy collapsed in September 1992 when the pound was forced out of the EC currency grid. The year after the election brought crisis after crisis. He is now the least popular prime minister since opinion polls began.

Some say he has succeeded in all the tasks assigned to him. He led ably and impressively through the Gulf war against Iraq, scrapped the poll tax, won the 1992 election against the odds and signed Britain up to closer integration with Europe.

But it has been hard for him to build credibility among his colleagues, to develop an image of strength in dealing with a Conservative Party bitterly divided over the EC — threatening to undermine his 17-seat parliamentary majority.

Friends say his nadir was a trip to Tokyo in September in which he was reported as referring to cabinet colleagues as "bastards" and to opponents on his backbenches as "barmy".

But Mr. Major turned the tide, they add, with a rousing speech to the conservatives' annual conference in Blackpool in October. The party finally realised it needed him, they say.

"The longer he stays the more he will get a reputation as a survivor," said one party adviser. His fortunes could

change dramatically if he succeeds in his efforts to bring peace to Northern Ireland, in the way Thatcher won a huge popularity boost from the 1982 war with Argentina over the Falkland Islands.

Major remains the only man who can unify the right and left wings of the conservatives, his allies say. They see him riding economic recovery to another election victory in 1996 or 1997.

Allies deny Mr. Major has no ideas of his own. His beliefs are firmly rooted, they say, in the lessons of his working class background as the son of a former Vaudeville performer who fell on hard times after his garden gnome business collapsed.

"He is a conservative," said one. "He is not someone who needs to go around inventing ideology."

Being a conservative has not been enough to win Mr. Major the admiration or even the acquiescence of his predecessor.

Mr. Thatcher's memoirs suggest she considered him weak intellectually and somehow second-rate. Recalling how he had cavilled when she offered him the job of finance minister only three months after being appointed foreign secretary, she wrote: "I told him that we all have to accept second best occasionally. That applied to me just as much as to him."

LETTERS

Traffic problems

To the Editor:

As an expatriate, I wish to write about my experience in Jordan. I thought I would start with something very visible in the streets of Amman.

First of all, I must say that Amman is one of the cleanest cities I have ever visited or lived in. Clean means loving to drive around and enjoying the beautiful landscape of this mountainous city, even when you are driving to work early in the morning. Nice, isn't it?

Well, this is when the adventure begins. And maybe my message will get somewhere and reach someone's attention. Three groups in Amman must be watched carefully and hence, some disciplinary action must be taken against them. 1. Yellow cabs (taxi): They drive around as if they own the streets of Amman. They stop wherever and whenever they wish, risking many accidents. Most of the time we, the public, are at fault because accidents normally involve hitting the car from the rear end. In this case we are automatically at fault.

2. White cabs (service cars): Who decided on their pick up stops? Beats me! But how do you justify these cars blocking the way by just parking there, waiting for their passengers, even in the main streets? We appreciate the fact that these cars are part of the backbone of this country's transportation system, but I am sure there can be found better stops for them instead of the middle of the street. It is a nightmare I go through (and I believe others like me) every morning before I reach my office.

3. Traffic police: Although they do their best to organise traffic every morning, their best isn't enough. Why don't they take a closer look at how flagrantly traffic laws are being violated every minute. For instance, many drivers in Amman do not seem to understand the meaning of a "stop" sign. Watch intersections with stop signs carefully and you will know what I am talking about. Crossing a stop sign is like jumping into a death trap. Any car has a decent chance of collision.

These points should not distract us from the core of the problem. The authorities must review the performance of their traffic police in order to take tougher measures against those who made a habit of breaking the law and getting away with it.

Instead of issuing citations for broken signal lights or disfunctional head beams, I recommend concentrating on more crucial matters.

Al Ghazarian,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

مركز الصحافة

Egypt cautious on Iran's call for dialogue

CAIRO (R) — Egypt reacted cautiously Tuesday to a call by Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani for the two countries, once close friends but fierce rivals for more than a decade, to open a dialogue and improve relations.

Although the two regional powers remain at odds, with Iran's brand of Islamic fundamentalism pitted against Egypt's Western-oriented foreign policy, Mr. Rafsanjani's call could signal a temporary truce in a war over the airwaves.

Mr. Rafsanjani was speaking in an interview with prominent Egyptian journalist Mohamed Heikal, broadcast on Lebanese television Sunday.

"I think Iran and Egypt should have a dialogue. Of course there are also opposing views in Iran. But I continue to believe that we should have a dialogue with Egypt in the hope that we might be able to correct the future course," Mr. Rafsanjani said.

Egyptian presidential spokesman Mohamed Abdel Moneim, commenting on the interview, said: "There are official channels for these things. We do not discuss these things in the media."

"It is the same as it has been for years, nothing has changed," he told Reuters Tuesday.

For several months the usual media war between Cairo and Tehran has much abated.

Earlier this year, Egypt and Iran were attacking each other almost daily with vitriol that often targeted their leaders personally. Egypt accused Iran of encouraging Muslim militant violence in Egypt and the Arab World, and Iran accused Egypt of treachery to the Muslim cause and subservience to Washington.

But in recent months, Iranian criticism of a wave of executions of Egyptian militants has been conspicuous by its absence. The Tehran's media have turned their attention from militant struggle in countries like Egypt and Algeria to opposing the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace agreement.

Egypt in turn has concentrated on the militant connection with Pakistan and Afghanistan, dropping Iran and Sudan from the list of named culprits.

President Hosni Mubarak explained in Cairo newspapers on Tuesday that militants planning operations like last week's attempt to assassinate Prime Minister Atef Sedki came from Afghanistan via Yemen, bringing money with them from abroad.

In the time of the late Shah of Iran in the 1970s, Egypt and Iran were close allies, bound by a pro-Western view of the Middle East and a personal bond between the Shah and late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

But the Islamic revolution in 1979 changed all that. The Iranian mullahs and the secular Egyptian leaders who made peace with Israel could not have been further apart.

The gulf widened when Egypt took in the ousted Shah and refused to hand him over to Iranian revolutionary leaders.

The Shah now lies buried in a 19th century Cairo mosque alongside members of Egypt's own former royal family.

Egypt backed Iran against Iraq during the 1980-88 Gulf war. Iraq used Egyptian-made munitions and employed two million Egyptian workers while Cairo did its best to keep Iran's Islamic revolution hermetically sealed.

The two sides still jockey for position in the Gulf states, which both consider part of their spheres of influence.

But they reestablished low-level diplomatic missions this year and Iran pumps over half a million barrels of oil per day across Egypt through the Sumed pipeline.

Security Council

(Continued from page 1)

The United Nations would let the proceeds be used to buy food, medicine and supplies for essential civilian needs, subject to U.N. monitoring of sales and the equitable distribution of humanitarian supplies, including to rebel areas. "Iraqi authorities bear full responsibility for any suffering in Iraq," Mr. Clinton said.

German priests lose touch with their shrinking flocks

By Michael Christie
Reuters

COLOGNE, Germany — It took 600 years to build Cologne's magnificent Gothic cathedral.

But at the current rate at which the faithful are defecting, every pew in the surrounding Catholic diocese could be empty in a century.

Germany's main churches, Catholic and Protestant, saw record numbers of people turning their backs on them last year — 190,000 Catholics and about 240,000 Protestants.

"This is not just a church crisis. This is a religious crisis," warned Bishop Karl Lehmann, head of the Catholic Bishops' Conference at their recent congress in Fulda.

Unlike in other countries, where falling church attendance may be the only guide to a congregation's strength, German bishops know how many are leaving because their churches are funded through a special tax levied on all believers.

To get out of paying the tax, Germans must formally renounce their membership and get a certificate from their church to present to the tax authorities.

With the economy stuck in neutral and wages eroded by four per cent annual inflation, many churchgoers are thinking twice about paying the hefty 10 per cent the levy adds to tax bills.

Last year, Cologne, Europe's wealthiest Catholic diocese and the worst-hit in Germany, saw its congregation shrink by 24,604, or just over one per cent.

The diocese takes in most of Germany's industrial heartland and is particularly vulnerable to economic shocks, said Father Heiner Koch, head of its counselling service.

He blamed many defections on a temporary 7.5 per cent solidarity tax introduced by Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government in 1991 to help pay for the soaring costs of German unification.

A recent study commis-

sioned by the Bishops' Conference found most Catholic defectors were deeply unhappy with the tenets and behaviour of the church.

"Church tax is certainly one of the main reasons why people are leaving the church," said Father Wilhelm Passavant, a priest at Bonn's Catholic Cathedral.

"But if you look deeper, it becomes obvious that many people can simply no longer come to terms with God."

The study by the Allensbach Institute found that 83 per cent of those who left the church disagreed with the Pope's ban on contraception and 63 per cent disliked his stand on divorce. More than half said there were too many hypocrites in the church.

In many cases, church tax was simply the straw that broke the camel's back. Only 20 per cent knew how much they paid.

"Whatever church tax was given as a reason for leaving the congregation, it was rarely in isolation and more often accompanied by harsh criticism of the church," wrote the institute's Renate Koecher in the Rheinischer Merkur newspaper.

"It is not just the money — I can afford that and after all, we really do live in the lap of luxury," said one of the people polled by the institute.

"The question for me is, do I really want to support this institution with my money and when I see this pomp and snobbery I become more and more convinced that I don't."

Protestants always had fewer scruples about quitting than Catholics, who usually have closer ties to their church, said Father Peter Kollmar of the German Protestant Church.

"But both churches are obviously suffering from the increasing secularisation of society," he added.

More worryingly for church leaders, the Allensbach study found the pews packed with doubters thinking about or even preparing to leave — at least 23 per cent of Catholics

were considering the move, 31 per cent of Protestants.

"Whereas previous periods of church defections have been followed by a few years of consolidation, there seems no end in sight to the current wave," the institute said.

Breaking the wave will be no easy task, said Father Passavant. "We only find out that people are thinking about leaving after they've left," he complained. "I don't know why, but people seem to find it difficult to talk to us."

Andreas Feige, one of Germany's leading experts in the sociology of religion, said the issue was not loss of faith, but the decreasing importance of institutions in a society which promotes individualism.

"It is not astonishing that more and more people are leaving. It is astonishing that so many remain members," said Mr. Feige, a professor at the Technical University of Braunschweig.

Mr. Feige's argument finds an echo even among the faithful.

"I would never leave the church because my faith is so firmly anchored," said teacher Helena Hammelrath, a Catholic mother of four. But she can understand why some do.

"If you look closely at the church, you see it's an organisation just like a state or a political party with people who want power and who will do anything to cling to it... The church has in reality little to do with absolutes."

Bishop Lehmann argues that the church must change radically if it is to survive and spread the Christian message.

That does not, however, mean changing the theological fundamentals. "If you plant a seed, you can't fumble around with it constantly, digging it up, moving it around. You have to wait for it to grow," said Father Passavant.

Mr. Koch agreed: "Sure, we have to ask ourselves where we can adapt to modern society, but there will always be some aspects we will not want to adapt to," he said.

Six countries to get global warming data stations

By W. ndy Lubetkin

GENEVA — The establishment of six new stations to collect data on global warming and ozone depletion should help scientists fill in major gaps in their understanding of how the world's climate system works.

The United States and other developed countries have agreed to provide experts to assist in setting up the stations, which will be funded by a \$4.8-million grant from the Global Environment Facility and managed by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), the U.N. agency specialising in earth's atmosphere and climate, according to a WMO press release.

Located in isolated areas of Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya and China, each Global Atmosphere Watch (GAW) station will carry out a wide range of measurements of concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The new stations will function as part of a worldwide network of WMO stations monitoring the changing composition of the atmosphere and acquiring baseline data related to global warming

and ozone depletion.

Their contribution should double the amount of data available from remote areas of the atmosphere, according to Bernard G. Mendonca, a scientist with the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), who is working with WMO to establish the new baseline stations.

Setting up the new stations, the WMO press release points out, has taken on added significance given the record low ozone levels recorded over Antarctica in October. One of the stations, to be located at Ushuaia in the southern tip of Argentina, will be positioned under the outer edge of the present ozone hole. Mr. Mendonca explained in an interview.

Because the stations will collect "baseline" data, each will be located in a remote area removed from local impacts of industry and human activity. In the past there has been a dearth of such information from the developing world.

"The sites have been chosen to give insightful information to help us determine where the major sources of pollutants and naturally occurring green-

house gases are," Mr. Mendonca said, adding that the stations would play an equally important role in identifying "sinks" — forests or oceans that remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

Mr. Mendonca pointed out that each of the GAW stations will be located in a region from which no baseline information is currently available. The new data, he said, will contribute significantly to scientific understanding of the troposphere — the layer of atmosphere that extends outward 8 to 11 kilometres from earth's surface.

"When a carbon monoxide or methane molecule enters the atmosphere it enters the troposphere, where these molecules undergo chemical transformations," he explained. "In vast areas of the world we don't understand this chemistry and hopefully these stations will give us a better idea of how it works far from the areas where pollutants enter the atmosphere."

The project will provide sophisticated measuring equipment to the host countries, and train those who are to operate

it, the WMO said. The host countries will be responsible for providing the buildings, utilities, personnel and operating costs to ensure that the data collection continues in the years to come. Developed countries — including the United States, Canada, Spain, France and Germany — have agreed to provide experts to assist in setting up the stations.

Mr. Mendonca, who is director of observatory operations at NOAA's Climate Monitoring and Diagnostics Laboratory in Boulder, Colorado, noted that his laboratory is already hosting a Chinese scientist. The visiting scientist is designing, building and calibrating a CO₂ measuring system that will go into operation at station next year. Once in operation, that station will share information on CO₂ with others in the GAW global network.

The expansion of the GAW network, Mr. Mendonca said, will help scientists gain a "global perspective" on climate data — United States Information Agency.

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Israel, PLO

(Continued from page 1)

Yunis. Another photographer was roughed up by soldiers and detained briefly.

Patrick Baz, chief photographer of Agence France Press, was pushed and roughed up by soldiers at Jabalya refugee camp.

"Journalists in Gaza today were not caught in crossfire covering the events but became clear targets of Israeli soldiers," the foreign press association in Israel wrote in a press release issued Tuesday.

Some of the heaviest clashes broke out at Khan Yunis where Ahmad Abu Rish, a Fatah Hawk, was gunned down on Sunday a week after he was arrested by Israel.

His death, the 26th Palestinian killed by Israeli bullets since the autonomy accord, led the Hawks to resume the armed struggle in defiance of Mr. Arafat ceasefire orders and sparked the fresh violence.

Mr. Abu Zaydah denied any split between Fatah's political and military wings saying if a new ceasefire order came from PLO headquarters in Tunis it would be obeyed.

Colonel S, a deputy commander in Gaza Strip, also called for calm and admitted for the first time the army did not intend to kill Abu Rish.

"We want to tell Fatah and the population that we have not declared war on them. We are only fighting terrorists who want to sabotage the peace process."

Autonomy talks make progress on detainees

(Continued from page 1)

perhaps a Palestinian currency.

The governor of Israel's central bank has said the printing of Palestinian money would not be a good idea at this stage in the development of the occupied territories.

Mr. Rabin emphasised he would in no event agree to uproot any Jewish settlement during the self-rule period. If settlers themselves picked up and left, Israel would still maintain troops at the site, Yedioth said.

Mr. Arafat told the Tunis meeting that he had also insisted on the release of all Palestinian prisoners and demanded control over the crossing points.

If the Palestinians did not control the crossing points, they could come under international control, Mr. Arafat

suggested, according to the official.

Mr. Rabin told his French counterpart Edouard Balladur that his country was determined to move the peace process forward despite a flare-up of violence in the Gaza Strip, a French government spokesman said.

Spokesman Bernard Bri-gouleix said Mr. Rabin had stressed that his government "would not let itself be discouraged by any provocation or stalemate."

The French government spokesman said Mr. Rabin also welcomed the "size of French and European economic projects" planned for the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

After his talks with Mr. Balladur, Mr. Rabin called on President Francois Mitterrand at the Elysee Palace before leaving on a tour of European capitals.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

The Evangelical Lutheran Church and The Scandinavian Ladies of Amman, Will have a Christmas Bazaar on Friday, Dec. 3, 1993, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Church Hall of the Evangelical Lutheran Good Shepherd's Church in Um Issumaq opposite the Municipality Building.

Welcome

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- b- Shorthand skills required.
- c- Past experience not a priority.
- d- Further skills looked into favorably.

2- SECRETARY

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- b- Advanced typing skills.
- c- English / Arabic.

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his excellency the president,
government, and the people
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more progress and prosperity
on the occasion of
the 75th anniversary
of the great union of Romania.

World Bank backs private lending efforts to world's poorest

WASHINGTON (AP) — The world's biggest lender, the World Bank, wants to help some of the world's poorest people borrow as little as \$50 — enough to buy a cow or some chickens and stave off hunger.

The idea is to put money in the hands of the poor. Such efforts are seen as more effective than the cash that governments that have borrowed billions of dollars from the World Bank are spending on social programs.

The bank's support for small loans to individuals is part of a new effort to cut world hunger in half — a goal bank officials now believe can be achieved in a generation. Currently, about 30 per cent of the world's people are poor and hungry.

He said bad government policies, rather than war, civil unrest or drought are the main causes of world hunger.

The World Bank's charter allows it to lend only to governments, but bank officials said they are exploring new ways to aid small-scale lending programmes, including direct donations to non-government entities.

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For the year that began in June, the bank will lend \$4.5 billion for policy reform, \$1.6 billion for education and \$1.5 billion for population, health and nutrition.

The principle of the grassroots loans is simple: Instead of giving a food package, the programmes lend a starving family enough money for a cow, chickens or a bolt of cloth to produce income for food.

It's a principle that already has worked successfully in several countries, with up to 97 per cent of borrowers paying back their loans. Mr. Serageldin said in an interview.

"I would like to see us become the new abolitionists," Mr. Serageldin said. "Just as in the last century people said that slavery was unconscionable, I think in the world of plenty that we live in today, we should all be striving to remove degradation from human dignity, the silent hunger that is everywhere in the world."

The bank's new effort was endorsed by Fawzi Al Sultan, IFAD president who is participating in the conference.

"The poor are bankable. With \$50 to \$100, you can triple a family's income, and that increases the family's nutritional intake," Mr. Al Sultan said. "It changes the social structure."

Clarke predicts 2.5% increase in British output in 1994

LONDON (AFP) — Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke predicted on Tuesday that Britain's economic output would grow by 2.5 per cent in 1994 in real terms after rising by 1.75 per cent in 1993.

Mr. Clarke, presenting the 1994/95 budget speech to the House of Commons, revised up the prediction made in March by his predecessor, Norman Lamont, who said that output would rise 1.25 per cent this year.

Analysts in London predicted that GDP would grow by 1.8 per cent in 1994 and by 2.75 per cent in 1995.

According to the latest official figures, Britain's output, measured as gross domestic product (GDP), grew by 1.9 per cent in the year to the end of September 1993.

The government's main priority is to "sustain the economic recovery now under way and to create the right climate for growth and jobs," Mr. Clarke said.

The chancellor said he was determined to "take no risks with inflation" and said that low inflation must remain a permanent feature of the British economic landscape.

Mr. Clarke predicted that Britain's underlying rate of inflation would stay between one and four per cent in 1994, the target set by the government at the start of the year.

He said that he expected the budget deficit to fall from just under \$0 billion pounds (\$75 billion) this financial year to \$8 billion pounds in 1994/95, cutting the earlier estimate of the 1994/95 deficit of 44 billion pounds.

Mr. Clarke predicted that the deficit would fall by seven billion pounds in 1995/96 and by 10.5 billion pounds in 1996/97.

The chancellor said that the total salary bill for the public sector would be frozen in 1994/95 and said he hoped to eliminate the budget deficit by the end of the decade.

Japan's unemployment rate climbs to 2.7%

OSAKA (AFP) — In another sign of Japan's worsening economic slump, the government Tuesday said the unemployment rate rose again to hit 2.7 per cent in October, the highest point for nearly six years.

The job market continued to shrink.

The seasonally-adjusted jobless rate rose by 0.1 of a percentage point from the figure a month earlier, following a 0.1-point rise in September, after a 0.1-point fall in August.

The Management and Coordination Agency said.

The October jobless rate reflected a 21.4 per cent year-on-year jump in the number of unemployed, to 1.76 million, compared with a 0.1 per cent increase in the number of employed, to 65.01 million, the agency said.

The ratio of job offers to job seekers has fallen below one since October 1992, after peaking at 1.46 in March 1991.

Job openings fell from a year earlier in almost all industries in October, led by the manufacturing sector, where job offers plunged 33.4 per cent.

Wholesalers, retailers, restaurants, services, transportation and communications also marked a double-digit decline in openings.

Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa said Tuesday that he would make efforts to cut income taxes in order to boost Japan's stagnant economy.

"I will deal with income tax reduction in reforming the tax system," the prime minister said, adding that the government was in a "predictable and very serious" condition.

The prime minister said he would overhaul the fiscal system next January but did not specify the size of an expected income tax cut.

The tax commission, an advisory panel to Mr. Hosokawa, submitted a report to the prime minister recently, proposing an income tax cut for boosting consumer spending and economic activities.

China set to become major new market for Arab oil

ABU DHABI (AFP) — China is expected to become a net oil importer in the next few years and Arab states will be the main beneficiaries, an official Arab report has said.

China's demand for oil will rise to three million barrels per day (b/d) by 1995 and around 3.7 million b/d by 2000 due to rapid economic growth, said the report published by the Cairo-based Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Arab countries in the Middle East would be "the main source of crude supplies for China," it said.

China currently produces around 2.8 million b/d, and its output is projected to reach three million b/d by 1995 and 3.1 million b/d by 2000.

China, with estimated crude reserves of 24 billion barrels, already plans to import 60,000 b/d from Saudi Arabia under an agreement signed in July during a visit to Riyadh by Chinese Vice Premier Li Langqing.

Around 20,000 b/d will also be supplied by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), already a major fertilizer exporter to Beijing.

Arab states produce more than 16 million b/d of oil but some of them, mainly in the Gulf, have embarked on major projects to expand output capacity to meet a projected increase in world demand.

Around 2.8 million b/d of Arab crude are exported to Japan, four million b/d to the European Community, two million b/d to the United States and the rest to other countries, mainly in Asia.

Gulf Arab states alone produce around 13 million b/d.

According to the 10-nation OPEC, Arab proven crude reserves stood at 628.4 billion barrels at the end of 1992, accounting for 61.8 per cent of the total world oil reserves of 1,016 billion barrels.

Since 1991 Qatar's reserves have fallen to 3.73 billion barrels from 4.5 billion, and Kuwait's to 96.5 billion barrels from 97 billion.

Russia seeks to boost exports to Arab Gulf states

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Russia aims to boost exports to Arab Gulf states as part of efforts to tackle its economic crisis, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Shokhin said in an interview published here Tuesday.

Mr. Shokhin said he discussed trade and investment cooperation with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) during his three-day visit.

"Russia intends to bolster links with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states as we believe the main weight in Arab politics has moved to economic cooperation with the GCC," he told the official UAE news agency WAM.

"We think our current policy of boosting exports to foreign markets will enable Russia to find a way out of its economic problems."

GCC states — Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE — make up the largest consumer market in the region, with imports of more than \$50 billion a year, nearly half the total Arab imports.

French jobless rate hits 12%

PARIS (AFP) — French unemployment rose by 1.2 per cent in October to a total of 3,282,500 at the end of the month, according to seasonally adjusted figures released Tuesday by the French labour ministry.

The unemployment rate rose to 12 per cent of the workforce, the ministry said.

In terms of figures not corrected for seasonal variations, unemployment hit 3,368,300 at the end of October, up 11.9 per cent in a year and 2.1 per cent in a month.

The ministry said there had been another rise in the number of long-term unemployed (more than a year), to 1,055,000 at the end of October, up 3.2 per cent in a month.

In another development, Societe Generale Bank's economic reports department said Tuesday that the measure...

Indonesia warned state funds being wasted

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia, one of the world's poorest nations, is warned that it is wasting state funds on expensive projects, senior economists said.

In October, Japan, Indonesia's largest donor nation, formally signed a soft loan agreement worth \$1.3 billion as part of a \$5.1 billion World Bank package for the world's fourth most populous nation.

Despite a foreign debt of more than \$70 billion — at \$50 billion of public — Indonesia's loan servicing record makes it a popular borrower from Western nations and banks.

But economists attending the conference called for prudence in repaying debts and seeking new ones, arguing that in the next long-term development plan beginning next year Indonesia must choose the areas where the funds are to be spent more carefully.

Antara quoted Johannes Sumartono, former head of Indonesia's economists association, as saying the government had to avoid financing projects that were feasible only if they needed privileges like protection and subsidies.

His remarks appeared to be a swipe at Research and Technology Minister Jusuf Habibie, whose preoccupation with high-tech aviation and shipping projects have drawn criticism at home and abroad.

Mr. Sumitro, also a former finance minister, told the meeting around 30 per cent of state funds were missing. It was not possible to contact him to confirm the figure.

He said state funds were being squandered on projects that included siphoning off of funds while they were being disbursed, waste in procurement and lack of accountability.

A senior foreign banker said in October that Indonesia's foreign debt was likely to grow by up to \$5.5 billion this year because of the sharp appreciation of the yen, in which much of its borrowings are denominated.

Education ministry spills budget beans

LONDON (R) — Britain's Education Ministry blundered on Tuesday when it inadvertently issued details of Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke's budget hours before he spoke.

The ministry delivered a statement to parliament's press gallery several hours before the finance minister was due to begin his big speech, which is kept closely under wraps until its presentation.

Red-faced officials quickly withdrew the statement, which crowded about a big rise in education spending next year, and Prime Minister John Major's office said it would investigate.

In the statement, Education Secretary John Patten said the planned 6.8 per cent spending rise showed the government was committed to education.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 1, 1993
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: This first day of December shares only one aspect, the Moon, trine Jupiter which gets us off to a good start allowing you to view your congenial associates from a new stance, reconsidering their various talents and aptitudes.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get out in the world of activity early and try and find out just how you can best advance your credit and career conditions so your prestige soars.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Now you need to wide awake to find new ways to implement the vocational activities by which you get your secure structure.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Look for better ways to handle your business.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) You are a well organized person and you like to have everything in its proper place and this is a very good day to add to success in this direction.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Think about persons who understand your mundane objectives, see and be with them and get their ideas how you can make them work better.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Don't go off on a wishful thinking spree but get down to the brass tacks of any situation and you can bring your personal longings closer to you.

Cartoons

ANDY CAPP

JEFF

JEFF

JEFF

JEFF

JEFF

JEFF

JEFF

JEFF

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris

"Remember, dear, I have to share myself with hundreds of TV actors who also want my attention!"

JUMBLE.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CAROK
ENDUC
DEAMOP
POOSUR

WHAT THE REPORTER GOT AT THE ICE CREAM PARLOR.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: AFTER OPIUM MISERY STRONG
Answer: What the coastal king proclaimed to his subjects — SERFS, UP!

THE Daily Crossword

by Rena M. Campbell

ACROSS

- Acting org.
- Figure experts
- Task
- Romanian dance
- Plumbers
- Vietnamese city
- Catches up with
- Cry in Ohio
- Feasible
- seizure of power
- Phonics
- diem
- Years, for one
- RBI and ERA
- Cuff
- Musical work
- Decks in finery
- Noteworthy time period
- Shade of a color
- Mope
- Basketball player
- Handle
- Gen "Robert"
- Turkish VIP
- Wine sampler
- Out of (incomplete)
- Become merged
- Use a specimen
- Brewing need
- Cheering word
- Fragments
- Participate
- Vegetarian
- Make a choice
- Shell
- Pitcher
- Herder
- 1492 ship
- Suiting
- Tableland
- Mob or job follower
- Tightwad
- Part of USA: abbr.
- Govt. agency
- 9 sock unit
- Reprimand
- Concerning
- Middy
- Containers
- Turry
- Panning game
- Peel
- Enclosures in letters: abbr.
- "I Love You"
- Pichard or Michael
- Assume control
- Legitimate
- Cat on — Tin Roof?
- Not so — part
- Look a
- Travel by ox wagon
- Scalewags
- Spots
- Hanks
- Ducks
- Choice
- Scout pack leader
- Seesawing
- Ball of yarn
- Counsel: dist.
- Weight allowance
- Fasteners
- More entrance
- Lacoste
- Autocrat
- Male animal

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

SWIM ANDER APRIL
LOWA CHAIR BELL
POOR CARRY GRIM
PICK BARRIES BUDGE
PIE APART BATTER
ERRANT IDIOS
CAUSE THAT ADD
UNPAIDCORRER
GET BARS HOLLY
AROUND FINE
CUTTING BOOR JAR
ORION ROBINS
MUTT PAUST DORE
MADE BURE DRY
SHED WATER WIDE

Such a rise in the survey of consumer sentiment "has occurred only rarely in the 25-year history of this survey programme," the Conference Board said.

For the next six months, "more respondents than previously now expect business conditions to improve, fewer than previously fear they will worsen," the survey said.

The group's panel of 43 forecasters said they expected the economy to exhibit the same stop-and-go pattern it has de-

Inflation: Consumer prices should post modest gains of 2.9 per cent for this year and 3.3 per cent for 1994 as the weak economy helps to keep a lid of wage and price pressures. Prices were up 3.1 per cent in 1992.

The ministry plans a wide-ranging liberalisation of the economy to encourage private investment in the state-owned oil sector and widen the scope for foreign investment in industry.

"Our tax is very low compared with taxes in Egypt, France and other countries," an Omani commerce ministry official said. "It will help our joint ventures operate in Oman and taxes on them fetched nearly 25 million riyals (\$65 million) in the first nine months of 1993, according to official Omani figures."

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R)— Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets, Tuesday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1,3378.88	Canadian dollar
	1,7113.23	Deutschemarks
	1,9198.08	Dutch guilders
	1,4917.27	Swiss francs
	36.2226	Belgian francs
	5,9100.50	French francs
	1700.31.8	Italian lire
	109.20.30	Japanese yen
	8,4783.98	Swedish crowns
	7,4305.95	Norwegian crowns
	6,7745.45	Danish crowns
One sterling	\$1,4858.68	
One ounce of gold	\$370.80.57.20	

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CSCE opens meeting with call for protection of minorities

ROME (Agencies) — Foreign ministers from 52 countries opened a two-day conference on European Security Tuesday and heard strong calls for stepped-up efforts to protect national minorities.

"The minorities question, which has troubled the continent since the cold war ended, was expected to figure prominently at the ministerial session of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)."

Italian Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi urged the CSCE to strengthen its capacity to deal with the issue as part of its campaign of preventive diplomacy to head off conflicts.

"The protection of minorities constitutes a priority obligation in the double sense of ensuring stability and respect for human rights," said Mr. Ciampi, whose country assumed the CSCE presidency for a year.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher warned against "aggressive and often myopic nationalism" that has fueled conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere.

"On both sides of the Atlantic we share a strong interest in building respect for diversity, in enfranchising minorities, in offering every person a stake and a say in national life," he said.

Despite efforts by groups such as the CSCE, which last year created a High Commissioner for National Minorities, the world community has yet to get a grip on the potentially explosive problem.

Moscow is particularly worried about the fate of Russian-speaking minorities dispersed throughout the former Soviet Union and plans to press its concerns at the conference here.

Russian officials said that Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev would again seek support here for Moscow's drive against what it calls "aggressive nationalism."

Also on the agenda was the future of peacekeeping operations in the old Soviet republics and how to encourage Moscow's involvement without ceding it virtual total control of the region.

The conflict in the former Yugoslavia was to be discussed but most eyes here were on Geneva where peace talks resumed Monday after a two-month hiatus.

Mr. Christopher announced here Tuesday that Washington would contribute an additional \$150 million to Bosnia relief aid on top of the \$400 million already committed.

The Americans also softened their opposition to a European plan that would progressively lift U.N. sanc-

tions imposed on Belgrade if Bosnia's Serbs gave up more territory to the Muslim-led government.

The CSCE foreign ministers were divided over the Russian bid to take on a peacekeeping role in the conflicts rocking the former Soviet Union.

Diplomats said European Community countries, especially conference host Italy, wanted to give Russia a limited mandate, but Moscow's neighbours such as the Baltic states and Ukraine, as well as Canada, Norway and Turkey, were strongly opposed.

Mr. Ciampi said the conflicts that had beset Europe since the end of the cold war could induce a mood of "despair and pessimism."

The CSCE, which focuses on mediation and conflict prevention, had made unsatisfactory progress in the last three years, Mr. Ciampi said, citing the "terrible lesson" of the war in former Yugoslavia.

The Italian premier warned members against letting crises slide into open conflict. "It is not realistic to hide behind the immediate costs of action without considering the future costs, which are no less real and often heavier than doing nothing."

Pressing an Italian interest, Mr. Ciampi alerted European states to the risk of a "drift towards conflict" in the

Mediterranean region, unless the West made more effort to build interdependence between its Islamic and Christian shores.

But it was the controversy over Russia and its partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States — successor to the collapsed Soviet Union — that was dominating backstage debate, diplomats said.

They said EC states were proposing to look at any Russian peacekeeping role case by case, placing strict time and financial limits on any operation authorised.

But the unease of East European and former Soviet states about Moscow stepping into countries which have only recently freed themselves from its control was picked up by Swedish Foreign Minister Margaretha Af Ugglas.

Without mentioning Russia by name, she said certain states "openly declare that they have their own interests to protect. Understandably, the legacy of history creates some misgivings about the nature of such interests."

Any agreement, Ms. Ugglas said, would have to be based on "the consent of the parties, on an understanding of the tasks and rules of behaviour of the forces concerned and on a supervisory role for CSCE monitors."

Gore to spread wings on world stage

WASHINGTON (R) — Vice President Al Gore, who has emerged as Bill Clinton's top troubleshooter, is about to spread his wings on the world stage in an effort to polish the administration's diplomatic image.

Mr. Gore departs Tuesday for Mexico for talks with President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and the following week embarks on a mission to Moscow that closely follows Russian parliamentary elections called by President Boris Yeltsin in a bid to keep reform efforts alive.

Mr. Gore and White House Chief of Staff Thomas McLarty go to Mexico City for talks on implementing the North American Free Trade Agreement, which creates a free-trade zone among the United States, Mexico and Canada beginning Jan. 1.

Before leaving for Mexico, Mr. Gore will join Mr. Clinton for talks at the White House with the leaders of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Belize.

The flurry of vice presidential activity reflects a change in style more than in substance. He has been involved in the decision-making process since taking office in January, but now he will be talking about it more.

Major wins support for secret IRA peace moves

LONDON (AFP) — British Prime Minister John Major got broad support Tuesday for his government's secret peace talks with the outlawed Irish Republican Army (IRA).

But some Conservative politicians warned that talking with one side in the dispute could spur the other to violence.

Following weekend press disclosures, Northern Ireland Secretary Patrick Mayhew laid the government's card on the table in the House of Commons Monday.

He read out secret communications with the IRA's Sinn Fein political wing dating back to February, and made the strongest peace offer yet. If the IRA "unequivocally" renounces violence, open talks could begin in January.

His words were followed by IRA accusations of "lying" and "counterfeiting" some of the exchanges.

But Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams backed off Tuesday, saying he was prepared to "forgive" the "duplicitous" in order to keep the dialogue alive.

Reports meanwhile emerged that the government had told the IRA on Nov. 5 that talks with Sinn Fein could start in January — as long as there was no more killing.

Secret messages between the two sides suggested Mr. Major would be satisfied with a two-and-a-half-month respite from violence as a benchmark of a ceasefire that would clear the way for "exploratory" talks.

Ulster Unionist MP William Ross warned that government contacts with the IRA "en-

courages other terrorist organisations, on the Protestant side if you like, to turn to violence on an increasing scale."

Former Tory Party Chairman Norman Tebbit, who was seriously injured in a 1985 IRA bombing in Brighton that left his wife crippled, said the IRA was unlikely to lay down its arms without big concessions from the government.

"We are now in a position where we are very likely — in trying to make a deal with one side — to provoke the other to increase violence," he said.

There was no clear sign yet of a ceasefire and, in fact, a man believed to be Catholic was shot dead in Belfast early Tuesday in a killing claimed by the outlawed Protestant Ulster Freedom Fighters.

The British press was largely supportive of the secret negotiations.

"Contrary to some prevailing notions about open government," said the Daily Telegraph, "in the real world secrecy is often an absolute condition of successful negotiations."

The Times agreed, but chided Mr. Major for not having taken more care that his public remarks be reconcilable with the inevitable disclosure of what was being done under the table.

Announcing in the House of Commons, as the premier did on Nov. 1, that talks with the IRA would "turn my stomach" made him "appear hollow" Monday as he listened to Sir Patrick's disclosures, said the times.

China might end talks if Hong Kong moves on reform

HONG KONG (R) — China has signalled that any move by Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten to push ahead with even part of his democratic reform plans will kill any chance of a negotiated settlement with Britain.

The Beijing-controlled daily Ta Kung Pao Tuesday quoted Lu Ping, China's top official responsible for Hong Kong, as indicating even a bill containing supposedly less controversial issues would spell the end of the long-running negotiations.

Hong Kong's Executive Council, the colony's de-facto cabinet, met Tuesday amid speculation Mr. Patten will introduce a mini electoral reform bill to the Legislative Council following the failure of seven months of Sino-British talks to produce any deal.

While China and Britain are holding talks on the one hand, the Legislature is discussing and approving something (related) on the other. We just can't continue the talks under that situation," said Mr. Lu, who is director of China's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office.

"If the British side unilaterally tables the package in the Legislative Council, it would create big difficulties for the talks," he told a Hong Kong delegation visiting Beijing.

Mr. Patten first proposed widening democracy before Hong Kong's 1997 return to China more than a year ago, provoking a furious row with Beijing. Last March he published a reform bill but it has never been introduced to the legislature to allow the talks, which began in April, a chance to produce a deal.

The legislature has, however, passed a separate bill setting up a commission to oversee polls and work out electoral boundaries, also one of the original Patten proposals.

The latest showdown follows the 17th round of talks last week, where the two sides failed to agree even on so-called simple issues. These British interprets as cutting the voting age, abolishing government-appointed local councilors and introducing single-member legislative constituencies.

Mr. Patten is expected to introduce a mini-bill on these issues next month. Britain has offered China more talks on the most controversial parts of Mr. Patten's package, which would allow Hong Kong people to elect, directly or indirectly, the majority of legislators for the first time in 1995.

Patten gave little away after the Executive Council meeting but indicated he would reveal his next move at a question-and-answer session in the Legislative Council.

"We've considered the outcome of 17 rounds of talks with our Chinese colleagues," he told reporters.



Shahana Azmi (left) the Indian actress who with Mother Theresa received an international human rights award from French President Francois Mitterrand in 1989, kisses African National

Congress President Nelson Mandela after presenting him with a News-makers of the Year Award on behalf of a Cape Town newspaper (AFP photo)

De Klerk criticises rightwingers for setting up alternative government

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — President F.W. De Klerk Tuesday branded as "irresponsible and tragic" attempts by South Africa's far-right white Afrikaner Volksfront (AVF) to set up their own government.

South African news reports Tuesday called the AVF's move a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI).

"How can you think of UDI if you cannot say where the borders of such a state will be?" Mr. De Klerk said after a meeting with U.S. Secretary for Commerce Ron Brown. "If it wasn't so tragic, it would be amusing."

Throwing down the gauntlet to the government and the African National Congress (ANC), the AVF proposed alternative structures to counter South Africa's multi-party transitional authority (TEC), signed into law by Mr. De Klerk Monday and due to be set up on Dec. 6.

"The announcement is untimely and irresponsible," Mr. De Klerk said. "I do not think my signature on the TEC bill should have been unexpected."

The AVF's move contradicted progress reported by the conservative Freedom Alliance, of which the AVF is a member, in talks Monday with the government to bring rightwingers back to the country's democracy process.

Mr. De Klerk said that in the talks "the question of them becoming part of the TEC

(was) raised."

The alliance is made up of the Inkatha Freedom Party, the Ciskei and Bophuthatwana black homelands as well as the right-wing Conservative Party and the AVF who walked out of democracy talks in July to demand strong federalism and a separate white homeland.

Alliance Chairman Rowan Crojic said there had been "almost total agreement" on changes in the new interim constitution dealing with the powers of the country's nine new provinces.

"We agreed on the framework (of changes), the structures and divisions (of power between levels of government). Now we are refining terminology," he told the Star newspaper.

In a warning to the more extreme elements in the alliance, ANC President Nelson Mandela said that an "anti-fascist front" may have to be formed if far rightists continued to obstruct South Africa's transition to democracy.

"The who have been persecuting us have now formed the so-called Freedom Alliance... a group of men who want to maintain minority rule," he told reporters after meeting with Mr. Brown.

"We will not allow them escape in this regard and if they continue along those lines we will have no alternative but to call for the formation of an anti-fascist front," Mr. De Klerk, however,

warned against an anti-fascist front saying there would be "firm action against any breaking of the law. We don't need political fronts."

South African police Tuesday arrested 39 blacks allegedly undergoing military training in the mountains of Lebowa black homeland in the northern Transvaal, state radio reported.

The 39 were hiding out in caves in a remote area of the homeland. Police also seized weapons, including AK-47 assault rifles and R1 rifles.

A police spokesman in Pietersburg, north of here, said it was not yet known how long the group had been living in the caves or how long they had been in training.

Meanwhile, one man was killed and six people injured when an explosion ripped through a bus in the South African port of Durban Tuesday, witnesses said.

Police are investigating whether the man killed was carrying an explosive device.

"We are not ruling out any possibilities," police spokesman Major Bala Naidoo told Reuters.

Ma, Naidoo said police were still not certain what caused the explosion and forensic experts were searching the scene.

The bus was going past the city hall in downtown Durban with about a dozen passengers when the blast occurred at 10.15 a.m. (0815 GMT).

Talks offer no let-up for Sarajevo

SARAJEVO (R) — Rival Bosnian leaders pressed ahead with peace talks in Geneva Tuesday but the besieged city of Sarajevo was pounded by artillery once more.

Bosnia's Muslim-led government warned that the talks could collapse over Serb refusal to negotiate on the basis of a European Community (EC) plan that calls on them to cede land to the Muslims in return for an easing of sanctions.

Bosnia's U.N. ambassador, Mohammad Sacirevic, denied the Muslim delegation was about to walk out, but added: "I believe we have hit a critical stage... we could in fact see a collapse."

In Sarajevo, a U.N. military spokesman reported a marked increase in shelling and small arms fire.

He said mortar bombs and sniper rounds hit the centre of the Bosnian capital Monday as the Geneva talks began.

"Sarajevo was unstable due to shelling," Major Ildesbald Van Biesebroeck told reporters.

Sarajevo Radio said the Muslim-held towns of Olovo and Maglaj were shelled during the night and on Tuesday morning, killing one person and wounding seven.

In Geneva, international mediators were cautious about the chances of Serb, Muslim and Croat leaders clinching a deal.

Peace envoys Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg said that while the three sides were at least talking again, long and hard bargaining would be needed for a negotiated settlement.

"We're not in my view going to get a signed, sealed agreement here in the next few days but I think we may take the process on," Lord Owen, the European Community envoy, told reporters.

Bosnian leaders and their Serbian and Croatian backers went into a series of bilateral discussions on a proposed three-way split of the republic along ethnic lines.

The leaders agreed Monday to restart the peace process after two months of deadlock on the basis of a new EC plan offering a gradual easing of sanctions on rump Yugoslavia if the Bosnian Serbs give up some conquered land.

Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic began what were expected to be two further days of talks about revising an existing peace plan.

At issue is whether the Bosnian Serbs are ready to cede further land to the Muslims, who want at least three per cent more territory in order to create a viable state. The negotiations would also tackle the future status of Sarajevo and Muslim demands for access to the sea, Lord Owen told reporters.

Mr. Karadzic said he was ready to discuss offering the same concessions to the Muslims that his side withdrew when the peace process broke down earlier this year.

In a statement to Serbian Television Monday evening he said the Bosnian Serbs wanted peace and were prepared to help the Muslims create their

own state.

He did not think the talks would bring a breakthrough but he sensed less anti-Serb feeling than in the past. "We want peace and we are prepared to find ways for the creation of a feasible Muslim state," Mr. Karadzic said.

"We are prepared to discuss now some concessions the Serb side withdrew at an earlier date."

A U.N. aid official in Sarajevo said that after delays caused by fighting, a 26-truck relief convoy was allowed across the Serbian border to the Muslim city of Tuzla in northern Bosnia. Another convoy for the eastern Muslim enclave of Srebrenica was also allowed to proceed.

The United Nations has accused the Serbs of playing with people's lives in delaying food convoys vital for the survival of up to three million civilians in Bosnia this winter.

The warring factions signed an accord in Geneva Monday guaranteeing free movement for aid convoys, but U.N. sources were not convinced this marked a genuine change of heart.

European states are edging towards using military force to deliver aid in Bosnia if the three sides do not respect their new guarantee of safe passage, German officials said in Bonn.

"There is a clear tendency towards using military force to get convoys through," said a German Foreign Ministry official.

"France has declared itself ready in principle to use force, and the Netherlands also backs the idea very much."

Beauty queen becomes press attache in Poland

WARSAW (AFP) — The winner of the 1992 Miss Poland crown was named Monday as Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak's new media spokeswoman, the Polish News Agency (PAP) said. Ewa Wachowicz, 23, who finished third in that year's Miss World contest, was named as 34-year-old Pawlak's secretary in charge of press relations, the agency added. Ms. Wachowicz's candidacy for the post sparked a wave of controversy in political and press circles, and an anguished debate over her capacity to explain the actions of a fledgling government brought to power during a difficult transition period. Born of farming stock, she worked for seven months as a journalist and presenter on a private television channel before embarking on an agriculture course at a Warsaw college. Criticised by leaders of Poland's Peasant Party, Ms. Wachowicz received staunch backing from senior Pawlak aide Michal Strak. "Miss Poland 1992 has always stressed her deep attachment to the countryside and that merits particular attention," Mr. Strak said. According to the centre-left opposition daily Gazeta Wyborcza, Ms. Wachowicz asked for the announcement of her appointment, which was agreed last week, to be postponed. She was due to appear on television Sunday in a swimsuit and decided it would be improper to do so as a government aide.

New home for Finnish opera

HELSINKI (AFP) — Finland inaugurated its first official opera house Tuesday, a multi-million dollar structure in the heart of Helsinki specially designed to house the National Opera and ballet companies. Until now the home of the opera has been in a small theatre dating from the last century. The new Helsinki Opera House is capable of staging monumental productions. Its main auditorium seats 1,365 people, and the second, smaller hall 500 people. The project cost 740 million markka (about \$127 million) — a major leap over its initial estimated cost of some 120 million markka (about \$21 million) in 1977 when the project was decided on. Finland's newest major opera Kullervo by Antti Sallinen, Bizet's Carmen, and the ballet Swan Lake by Tchaikovsky will be performed during this week's inauguration ceremonies.

Arcadia, City Of theatre awards

LONDON (AP) — Arcadia, Tom Stoppard's play about love, death, and landscape gardening, and City of Angels, a musical import from Broadway, were named the year's best shows Monday at the annual Evening Standard Drama Awards. A dizzying and dazzling play set both a century ago and today in an English stately home, Arcadia will have its American premiere at New York's Lincoln Centre in 1995. City of Angels, an erstwhile Broadway hit, failed to repeat its commercial success in London. Despite mostly fine reviews, it never caught on with the public and closed on Nov. 13. Top acting prizes at the luncheon ceremony went to Ian Holm, as a dying father in Harold Pinter's Moonlight, and Ireland's Fiona Shaw, playing a woman consigned to the electric chair in American writer Sophie Treadwell's Machinal. "I think I could get to like this acting on the stage," said Holm, a sentimental favourite marking his return to the theatre after 14 years in TV and film (Chariots of Fire). A surprising choice for best director was Terry Hands for the showy Royal Shakespeare Company production of Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine The Great. Most promising playwright drew a tie: Scotland's Simon Donald for The Life Of Stuff and Canadian Brad Fraser for Unidentified Human Remains And The Nature Of Love, both plays have since closed.

Cyprus cow drops 2-headed calf

NICOSIA (AFP) — A cow in the southern Cypriot village of Klavdia has dropped a two-headed calf after a caesarian section, the official Cyprus News Agency reported, adding that the senior bovine was in excellent condition. The attending veterinarian, Antonios Georgiou, described the delivery as "a very rare phenomenon" and said the little monster was the result of artificial insemination. But he could not say whether the two-headed creature would survive.

هكذا صنع الإنسان

Michael Stich bids for Davis Cup glory

DUSSELDORF, Germany (AFP) — Michael Stich, who will be hoping to cap his phenomenally successful season by leading Germany to triumph in the Davis Cup final against Australia next weekend, doesn't smile easily or often.

Nor does he always bother to put on kid gloves when handling officialdom or the world's press.

But there has been a major transformation in the 25-year-old German in recent weeks.

The scowl has disappeared and the 6ft 4in 191lb Wimbledon champion has looked totally relaxed and serene during his strenuous training sessions inside Dusseldorf's Trade Fair Centre where he and his teammates will be bidding for their country's third Davis Cup victory next weekend.

And one of the main reasons for Stich's new-found composure could be that he has finally climbed out from behind the shadow of compatriot Boris Becker.

Becker, three-times Wimbledon champion and the main architect of Germany's first-ever Davis Cup successes in 1988 and 1989, has always overshadowed his compatriot.

Even Stich's 1990 Wimbledon victory was in some ways devalued by Becker who first won the all England title as a 17-year-old six years earlier.

But ironically this year, Stich, who chose to put his country first, has been the success. He has plundered six titles, won the ATP Championships and ousted Jim Courier from the number-two spot in the world rankings.

Becker, who decided to make himself unavailable for selection for the Davis Cup in order to concentrate on improving his world ranking, has flopped. He has slumped out of the world's "top-ten" players, failed to qualify for the ATP finals and is currently away from the tennis scene altogether and concentrating on becoming a father for the first time in the new year.

When Germany hammered Sweden a shock 5-0 away in the semi-finals. There were suggestions that Becker be recalled. But these were quickly and firmly squashed by experienced non-playing captain Niki Pietrangeli.



Michael Stich raises the ATP trophy after beating top-seeded Pete Sampras in Frankfurt on Nov. 21 (AFP photo)

Pietrangeli, 51, has said: "Having got this far, I think we shall stay as we are," he smiled.

Apart from Stich's five victories from the six singles he has played this year, Germany's successes in the World Group have been based on some inspiring performances by their second-string players — Marc Goellner, Patrik Kuhnen and Carl-Uwe Steeb.

Goellner, 23, who exploded on to the international scene by winning Nice in April, and who started a new style in tennis wear by coming out on court wearing his cap back to front, has won all four of the singles he has played.

But the Brazilian-born Goellner, despite shooting up the rankings to 51st, has suffered a sudden loss of form in the late season and has won only one match from half-a-

dozen tournaments.

Nevertheless Pietrangeli remains confident that Goellner will again rise to the occasion.

Pietrangeli's other option is to play 84th-ranked Carl-Uwe Steeb as his second singles player. The 26-year-old left-hander served his country well in the first-round when he recovered from a two-set deficit to beat Russia's Andrei Cherkasov in Moscow and help his team to a 4-1 win.

Kuhnen, Stich's regular partner in the doubles, is an almost automatic choice since he and Stich are unbeaten in the competition and have dropped only one set (a tie-break) in the three matches.

But although the Germans go into the finals favourites, they will have to be careful not to be too overconfident when they come out Friday in front of a packed and partisan

11,000 crowd. Nobody can ever write off Australia.

The Australians, winners of the competition 26 times and finalists on 16 occasions, scored their last success in the 1986 final against Sweden in Melbourne.

Their main singles hope this year will be Wally Masur — the 30-year-old from New South Wales who has been enjoying one of his most successful-ever seasons.

Masur, a semi-finalist at this year's United States Open and a finalist at Rosmalen and Manchester, got Australia off on the right foot in their first-round 4-1 win over the United States by beating Brad Gilbert. And he also looked impressive winning his matches against Leander Paes and Ramesh Krishnan in Australia's 5-0 whitewash of India in the semi-finals.

But like Goellner, Masur has suffered a loss of form in recent weeks. And like Goellner, he is hoping that everything will come right on the night.

"Playing in the Davis Cup final is really important to me," he confided. "I really want to do well."

Willy captain Neale Fraser has recalled Richard Fromberg as his probable second singles player.

The 40th-ranked, 23-year-old Tasmanian, better-known for his clay-court prowess, showed his metal in Australia's tough 3-2 quarterfinal victory over Italy in Florence in July.

There, in front of the noisy home fans, Fromberg won both of his singles — although he needed three tie-breaks to do so.

And the 6ft 3in player stayed ice cool under relentless pressure to clinch the tie by defeating Stefano Pescosolido 7-6 (7/3), 6-1, 6-4 in the deciding singles.

The Australians great strength will, as always, be in the doubles.

There the "Woodies" — Mark Woodforde and Todd Woodbridge, runners-up in the World Championships in Johannesburg last week, will be a formidable obstacle to German hopes.

Milan hold few fears for Champions League rivals Porto

MILAN (R) — AC Milan are not the European Champions League force of last season. According to Porto coach José Mourinho, whose side expects to leave northern Italy Wednesday with at least a point.

"We're going to the San Siro to win but a draw might be enough for us," said Ivic on the eve of the game brought forward a week so that Milan can travel to Tokyo for the Intercontinental Cup final against Brazil's Sao Paulo on Dec. 12.

Ivic already has one significant Milan scalp on his belt, having beaten Marseille coach when the French side eliminated Milan from the European Cup in a controversial March 1991 tie.

Having drawn 1-1 at the San Siro, Milan were losing the return leg 1-0 when they left the pitch in second half injury time, following a floodlight failure.

The walkout resulted in a one-year European ban. Ivic, who watched Milan's 0-0 league draw with Parma Sunday, believes the club are less imposing now.

"With the Dutchmen (Frank Rijkaard, Ruud Geulit and (Marco) Van Basten, Milan had a different technical and athletic potential," he said.

"Above all, they could use all sorts of schemes in a very fluid manner."

"Now, however, Milan have to try to make the most of the pace of players like (Jean-Pierre) Papin... Whilst against Parma, they played for a draw and with a five-man defence."

Porto, who beat Werder Bremen 3-2 in their opening Group B tie last week, will be weakened by the suspension-enforced absence of Bulgarian striker Emil Kostadinov and defender Jorge Costa.

Ivic is expected to replace Kostadinov with Brazilian defender Paulo Pereira, while Portuguese international Fernando Couto comes in for Costa.

Milan coach Fabio Capello also has problems. Van Basten, Croatia Zvonimir Boban, Montenegrin Dejan Savicevic, Frenchman Marcel Desailly plus Marco Simone, Gigi Lattini, Mauro Tassotti and Stefano Eranio are all ruled out, either through injury, ineligibility or disciplinary reasons.

But such is the Milan squad strength that Capello can still field an impressive foreign trio of Papin and Romanian Florin Raducioiu in attack, with Dane Brian Laudrup on the right of a midfield to which Demetrio Albertini returns.

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Armfield gets England SOS

LONDON (AFP) — Former England captain Jimmy Armfield was appointed Tuesday as advisor to the Football Association (FA) in their attempt to find a new national manager.

The one-time Leeds boss, who now works as a newspaper journalist and radio pundit, will help the four-man sub-committee established Tuesday to unearth a successor to Graham Taylor.

But Peter Swales will play no part, after following his resignation Monday as Manchester City chairman by announcing that he will not seek re-election to the FA International Committee next June.

Instead, the head-hunting will be conducted by FA chairman Sir Bert Millichip, chief executive Graham Kelly, Oldham chairman Ian Stott, Liverpool director Noel White and Armfield.

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Former Soviets challenge China as Asian Championships begin

S. Arabia takes first gold medal

MANILA (Agencies) — Athletes from the former Soviet Union prepared Tuesday to challenge the formidable Chinese as the 10th Asian Athletics Championships opened Tuesday at Rizal Memorial Stadium.

President Fidel Ramos formally opened the competition in a colourful ceremony bringing together nearly 500 athletes from 39 countries. They will compete in 41 events during the five-day championships.

A sporting event such as this brings together the youth of Asia in an arena where you can compete in an atmosphere of sportsmanship and fair play," Mr. Ramos said.

Chinese athletes, especially the women distance runners, are expected to go on a record-breaking spree.

Most of the attention has been focused on the Chinese. But Olympic champion Andrei Abduvaliev of Tajikistan and pole vault star Gregorij Yegorov of Kazakhstan lead former Soviet athletes hoping to establish the sports reputations of their new republics.

Chinese coach Ma Junren has tried to play down speculation that his 48-member team will establish new world records during the championships, saying his athletes are tired after a gruelling year of competition.

The Chinese team features Wang Junxia, record holder in the 3,000 metres and 10,000 metres, and Qu Yunxia, record holder in the 1,500 metres.

Qu has an injured left ankle, Ma said.

International sports officials in Manila for the championships said China is expected to enter the first rung of world athletics now that the Soviet Union and the once formidable east Germans have succumbed to politics.

"I believe the great surprise in the future of sports... is China," Primo Nebiolo, president of the International Amateur Athletics Federation, said. "China surely will be very strong."

He also discounted speculation that Chinese athletes are using performance-enhancing drugs. Instead, he said China's 1.1 billion population has given the country an unprecedented talent pool.

Asian Amateur Athletics Association (AAAA) President Mohammad Hassan of Indonesia described the games as the strongest since the biennial championship was first held in Manila in 1973 because of the presence of World and Olympic record holders from China and the six Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union.

"Asia is definitely on the move," Mr. Hassan said in a speech. "We have taken our athletics seriously. This is certainly a good sign for Asia."

More than 1,000 colourfully-dressed Filipino schoolchildren danced and tumbled before a cheering crowd to steal the show at Tuesday's opening of the championships in Manila.

Spinning red, yellow and blue umbrellas, the young students performed in shifting heat, bringing the 8,000 crowd alive after the march-past by athletes from the 40 competing countries.

Flags of all the Asian nations fluttered as the mascot of the games, based on an endangered water buffalo called the Tamaraw, danced and blew kisses to the crowd.

Eight paratroopers had earlier launched the opening ceremony for the biggest event on Asia's 1993 sporting calendar with a spectacular jump into the Rizal Stadium.

At least 1,000 athletes, from countries ranging from Saudi Arabia to South Korea, are taking part in the Nov. 30-Dec. 4 competition.

Chinese discus thrower Cao Qi wrapped up the first of her country's many certain gold medals on the opening day of the Asian Athletics Championships Tuesday but it was a Saudi Arabian steeplechaser who grabbed the glory.

Cao's best throw of 61.58 metres, well below her personal best, blunted the field and put her nearly four metres ahead of compatriot Zhao Yonghua.

But the excitement was on the track where Saudi runner Sa'ad Moazzab grabbed his country's first-ever championship gold medal with a blistering last lap to finish with a time of eight minutes 32.08 seconds.

Sa'ad and the United Arab Emirates' Ahmad Muhammad left the 1991 champion, Iran's Hamid Sadjadi, behind at the start of the last lap and looked set to battle it out to the finish of the 3,000 metre race.

But 200 metres from home Sa'ad produced a stunning burst of speed and won with ease.

Evans, triple individual gold medalist at the 1988 Olympics, should hold off the Chinese in the distance freestyle events and Lopez-Zubero should win the backstroke in the absence of leading rivals.

But Iwasaki, Olympic 200 breaststroke champion, faces a daunting challenge from China's Dai Guohong, fastest woman in the world this year in long-course 100 and 200 breaststroke and 400 individual medley.

The Chinese women look sure of a medal spree with Dai and teammates Le Jingyi and Lu Bin (freestyle). He Chong (backstroke) and Qu Yun and Liu Limin (butterfly) to the fore.

Top absentees include Olympic freestyle champions Alexander Popov and Evgeny Sadoviy of Russia and Kieren Perkins of Australia, as well as Finland's European 200 individual medley gold medalist Jami Sievinen.

Hungary bypass short-course championships, which deprives Palma of Olympic gold medalists Krisztina Egerszegi (backstroke) and

Though Sa'ad spoke no English, his teammates said he was ecstatic about his win and they expected him to be handsomely rewarded by the Saudi government.

The biggest disappointment was the form of Chinese runner San Ripeng, who was struggling to keep up the pace from the start and finished the race nearly half a lap from the other backmarkers.

Sun, with the fastest time this year of all the competitors, trailed at nine minutes 29.81 seconds, more than a minute slower than his best this year.

Many of the Chinese athletes arrived in Manila out of condition for the biennial championships after taking a break from last month's national games in Beijing.

The stifling heat also seemed to take its toll of Sun after the wintry chill of Beijing.

China's Cao, who is only 20, also threw below her best and conceded she could do better, although her winning distance was far further than the rest of the field.

"We have just finished our national games and we were not able to train for two months," she told reporters.

"I feel very pleased to win the first gold medal for China in these games," she added.

China is bidding to beat its record haul of 24 golds in Kuala Lumpur in 1991.

China's top 400-metre hurdler Han Qing just squeezed into the finals after finishing eighth of the qualifiers in Tuesday's two semifinals. Her time of 59.98 seconds was well below her Asian record of 53.96 seconds.

Chinese women plan medals spree in swimming

PALMA, Majorca (R) — A Chinese tidal wave threatens to engulf the inaugural World Short-Course Swimming Championships this week.

Chinese women swimmers, who performed prodigiously at their national games in Beijing in September, could emulate the feats of their compatriots on the athletics track and rewrite the record books at the four-day championships beginning Thursday.

They pack the leading 1993 women's world long-course rankings, the 50 metres freestyle serving as just one illustration of their predominance with six Chinese out-performing German star Franziska Van Almsick, the world short-course record holder. Van Almsick has withdrawn from the championships because her training was interrupted by influenza.

Freestyler Van Almsick, 15, had been due to race over her world record distances of 50, 100 and 200 metres at the championships in Palma Thursday.

"She's able to train again now but after a team event at the weekend it was clear that she wouldn't be at 100 per cent or even 95 per cent in Palma," her manager Werner Koester said Tuesday.

The Chinese may cap this in Palma unless they find two peaks in less than three months too tall an order and are saving their best for the more prestigious World Long-Course Championships in Rome next September.

China began to make their mark on the world scene in the late 1980s and collected four women's titles at both the 1991 World Championships and the 1992 Olympics, though none of those gold medalists is down to compete here.

Short-Course (25-metre pool) meetings lack the pedigree of the traditional long-course championships in Olympic-standard 50-metre pool and, with standards less well established, a stack of world marks could fall here.

However, many top swimmers are staying away, preferring to concentrate on their preparations for Rome.

Only three reigning Olympic individual champions — American Janet Evans, Spain's Martin Lopez-Zubero and Japanese teenager Kyoko Iwasaki — are in action.

Evans, triple individual gold medalist at the 1988 Olympics, should hold off the Chinese in the distance freestyle events and Lopez-Zubero should win the backstroke in the absence of leading rivals.

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Tamas Darnyi (individual medley).

Evans is the only one of seven reigning American Olympic individual champions on the trip but fast freestylers David Fox and Jon Olsen should make the U.S. presence felt.

Britain's Mark Foster, Brazil's Gustavo Borges and double European champion Antti Kasvio of Finland should also have a major say in the freestyle while Australia's Phil Rogers, who set two short-course world records in August, and British Olympic medallist Nick Gillingham give the men's breaststroke a strong competitive edge.

Sweden's top swimmer Louise Karlsson will miss the championships in Palma next month because of a shoulder joint injury which needs an operation.

Karlsson, 19, holds a clutch of European sprint titles but said her three latest golds, earned at the European Sprint Championships in England earlier this month, had caused her a great deal of pain.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HIRSCH
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AN EXPLORATORY OPERATION

North-South vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A 7 2
♥ J 4
♦ A K 6 4 2
♣ K 5 5

WEST
♠ K
♥ K 10 8 5 3
♦ J 8 7
♣ Q 9 4 2

EAST
♠ 9 8 5 4
♥ A 9 6
♦ Q 10
♣ J 10 7 3

SOUTH
♠ Q J 10 6 3
♥ Q 7 2
♦ 8 5 3
♣ A 6

The bidding:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass
3 ♠ Pass 4 ♠ Pass

Opening lead: Five of ♣

Follow the play of this deal from a rubber bridge game. Do you think South adopted the best line or was a better one available? If so, what?

South's hand is borderline for a game invitation. We would not fault anyone for passing, but we feel the quality of the spade suit and length in partner's diamond suit just makes the hand worth a try. North's hand is obviously good enough to accept.

The defenders started with two

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Eligible contractors may obtain tender documents from NRA head offices at Biader Wadi Alseer, Procur. Division against non-refundable JD 30,000 per set. Bidder should submit his offer in two separate sealed envelopes technical and financial. The technical one should include a copy of his bid bond.

Bid bond \$5000.00 in the form of bank guarantee or certified check should be enclosed, otherwise your offer will be rejected.

Natural Resources Authority

<p>PHILADELPHIA</p> <p>Edie Murphy — in BOOMERANG</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CONCORD</p> <p>CONCORD '1'</p> <p>Mel Gibson — in FOREVER YOUNG</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p>CONCORD '2'</p> <p>THE FUGITIVE</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>PLAZA</p> <p>MADONNA</p> <p>IN BODY OF EVIDENCE</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>Nabil Al Mashini Theatre</p> <p>presents a play entitled THE MASHINI</p> <p>A popular political comedy. Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jalal, Hassan Al Shaer, Foad Shomail in addition to other comedians. Every night at 8:15. Tickets are sold all day.</p>	<p>Nabil & Hisham's Tel.: 625155</p> <p>AMMAN THEATRE</p> <p>Theatre comedy THE MASHINI</p> <p>Daily 8:30 p.m. The theatre closes Saturday and Sunday. English synopsis available.</p>
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Kaddoumi stresses Palestinians' right to return or get compensation

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) foreign affairs chief Farouk Kaddoumi called on Monday to reaffirm the right of Palestinian refugees to return or receive compensation.

In a speech to the General Assembly, he also said the Israeli authorities, in the interest of safeguarding the Middle East peace process, must halt "the abominable acts committed by armed Israeli settlers" against Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Taking part in the annual U.N. debate on the question of Palestine, he said there were now 2.8 million Palestinian refugees, constituting about half of the Palestinian people.

"One-third of them continue to live in refugee camps in the occupied territory and the neighbouring Arab countries."

This question must be solved in a way that conforms to international legality, specifically, in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly Resolution 194 (III) of 1948, which affirmed their right of return or compensation for those who did not want to return."

Mr. Kaddoumi said that re-



Farouk Kaddoumi

solution, reaffirmed by the assembly year after year, was an "individual, inalienable right that must be distinguished from the right of every Palestinian to Palestinian citizenship and nationality."

Referring to the role played by the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in providing aid, he said: "I call on UNRWA to continue providing this assistance to the Palestine refugees

in all their places of abode. "We call on the General Assembly to affirm the principle of the international community on these fundamental issues with the same vigour with which it supports the Middle East peace process and its recent positive development."

Mr. Kaddoumi was referring to a declaration signed by Israel and the PLO on Sept. 13 on Palestinian interim self-government, beginning in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho. Details of the accord are still being negotiated.

Calling the human rights of Palestinians under occupation a fundamental issue, he said this was "a matter of principle that is not subject to negotiations or political vicissitudes."

"One must refer, in this regard, to the abominable acts committed by armed Israeli settlers against our people. We emphasise the responsibility of the Israeli authorities to put an end immediately to this dangerous phenomenon in the interest of safeguarding the peace process."

Earlier, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, a message to a U.N. meeting marking the

annual International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, said the Middle East was poised between democracy, development and prosperity on the one hand, and wars, calamities and Balkanisation on the other hand.

His message, read by PLO U.N. observer Nasser A. Kidwa also reaffirmed the goal of an "independent state with Arab Jerusalem as its capital."

The United Nations will continue to help the Palestinians implement the accord granting them autonomy, Secretary General Boutros Ghali has said.

"Today, International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, symbolises the continuing responsibility of the United Nations towards the Palestinians," he said.

Dr. Ghali set up a U.N. team charged with aiding social and economic development in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in September.

He recently sent a technical team to Tunis and the occupied territories at the request of the PLO to see how the world body could help implement the autonomy accord signed Sept. 13 in Washington.



Armed and masked activists from the Fateh Hawks take to the street as they called to resume their armed struggle against Israel in the Rafah refugee camp Tuesday (AFP photo)

PLO plans scheduled police deployment

By John Halaby
The Associated Press

AMMAN — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is going ahead with plans to deploy an initial force of about 8,000 policemen and border guards in the Gaza Strip and Jericho when Israeli forces pull out of those areas, a senior official said Tuesday.

Haj Khalid Mismar, chief of the moral guidance department of the proposed Palestinian force, said 1,300 soldiers of the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) in Iraq were expected to join 2,500 colleagues in Jordan early next week.

Mr. Mismar, whose office functions as the force's public relations department, told the Associated Press that the units stationed in Iraq had undergone training as border guards and policemen. Their colleagues based in Jordan and Egypt took similar courses.

Under its Sept. 13 accord with the PLO, Israel is expected to begin a partial withdrawal from Gaza and West Bank town of Jericho on Dec. 13.

Palestinians will take over the evacuated areas and will be in charge of local security and border patrols. The proposed police and border force, formally known as central security forces, will carry Kalashnikov machine guns and assault rifles.

However, snags have been reported in the Israel-PLO negotiations in Egypt on power transfer to the Palestinians and security as well as border-control issues.

PLO negotiators have accused Israel of trying to delay agreement before Dec. 13 and thus also postpone the beginning of the withdrawal, expected to be completed by April 13.

Israel has played down the problems, but has left the possibility that the deadline to begin withdrawal could be extended if no agreement was reached with the PLO.

"Barring last-minute surprises, the police force will be in Jericho and Gaza on Dec. 13," Mr. Mismar said. "We are not allowing the hurdles placed by Israel in the negotiations to hamper our preparations."

Mr. Mismar said the 3,800-strong units in Jordan and Iraq will regroup in Amman next week and then move down to the Jordan Valley to cross the River Jordan on Dec. 13.

Around the same date, some 4,500 other PLA soldiers will move into the Gaza Strip from Egypt across the Sinai border at Rafah, Mr. Mismar said.

Other PLO officials have given different numbers, but Mr. Mismar, named last week as spokesman for the security forces by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, insisted that his figures were the most accurate.

Mr. Mismar said those entering Gaza would be mostly made up of PLA soldiers stationed in Sudan, Libya, Yemen, Egypt and Algeria.

Israeli Police Minister Moshe Shahal said last week that his country had agreed to the deployment of up to 15,000 Palestinian policemen and guards.

The PLA force will be supplemented by 3,000 recruits from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as remnants of a Palestinian police that operated under Israeli control before disintegrating in 1988 after a Palestinian revolt began in the occupied lands in December 1987.

Iranian hijacker was 'fleeing repression'

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — The hijacker of an Iranian oil ministry plane flown to Iraq was a fireman escaping "repression" in his home country, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported Tuesday.

Ali Reza Karimi, 42, told INA in the southern port city of Basra that he worked for the Iranian Civil Defence Services.

He hijacked the plane to Basra Monday, while it was on a domestic flight in southern Iran with 38 people on board, "to flee the repression suffered by his family at the hands of the Iranian regime," Mr. Karimi was quoted as saying.

The hijacker, accompanied by his wife and five children, has asked for political asylum. Iran wants his extradition, charging the hijacker belonged to the Iranian armed opposition group, Mujahadeen-e-Khalq.

The Mujahadeen had denied any involvement. Passengers from the plane were transferred to Baghdad Tuesday and would return to Iran soon, Iran's IRNA news agency said.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi, quoted by IRNA, said the Iranian embassy in Baghdad was making arrangements for their return home in cooperation with Iraqi authorities.

Iran on Monday demanded that Iraq return the Fokker F-27 Friendship plane along with all 38 passengers and crew on board — including those responsible for commandeering it earlier in the day.

In Baghdad, there was no official confirmation that the passengers had arrived in the Iraqi capital but sources at the Iranian embassy said that diplomats there were in direct contact with the Iraqi authorities.

Iraq has not said what it plans to do about the plane, the hijacker or the passengers and crew.

A television station run by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday showed pic-

tures of a young man leaving the plane carrying a small child, followed by his wife and four children. Other passengers left the plane after him.

Dating back to the Gulf war of January-February 1991, Iraq demands the return of dozens of warplanes and civilian aircraft which were flown to safety across the border in Iran.

The diplomat said the passengers were still in Basra on Tuesday, but the official Iranian news agency IRNA said they had been taken to Baghdad ahead of their return home.

The passengers and crew are all in good health and the Iranian embassy is arranging their repatriation, IRNA reported.

It said the hijacker had asked to rejoin the Mujahadeen, who have bases in Iraq. There was no word on Baghdad's reaction to his request for asylum for his family either in Iraq or a third country.

The plane was first diverted to Kuwait, where the authorities refused landing permission, before heading for Basra. The F-17 was seized after take-off from Gachsaran headed for Ahvaz in the oil province of Khuzestan.

It was the first hijacking of an Iranian plane to Iraq since the end of the two countries' 1980-1988 war. Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said last week that Tehran wanted to normalise relations with its former foe.

Ties are still strained by Baghdad's support for the Mujahadeen, which launches cross-border raids from Iraq.

Iran said there were six women and eight children on the plane. No foreigners were on board.

IRNA said Iran summoned Iraq's charge d'affaires in Tehran on Monday to demand the return of the plane. "The note demanded the return of the plane, her passengers and crew as well as the hijackers," it said.

Kurds warn Germany; Turkish jets hit Iraq, France bans 2 groups

BONN (Agencies) — Kurdish groups warned Germany Tuesday that its crackdown on Kurdish activities could lead to retaliatory attacks and their lawyers to fight the curbs in court.

France banned two Kurdish organisations on Tuesday, saying they were linked with the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which is fighting a guerrilla war in Turkey.

Turkey said Tuesday it had made fresh air strikes against Kurdish rebel bases in northern Iraq but Iraqi Kurds denounced the raids saying they had killed three civilians.

Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's office said Monday's raids had hit PKK guerrillas.

"The planes struck targets in a five-hour operation on Monday," Colonel Dogu Sincigil of the Turkish general staff headquarters told Reuters. The air force, he added, had made 16 sorties against nine targets in regions he named as Mezli, Keryaderi, Sinji and Siv.

Ms. Ciller's office said in a statement the raids had demolished PKK camps and rallying points spread over an area of 400 square kilometres.

But an Iraqi Kurdish spokesman said the Turkish planes had bombed the newly resettled villages of Hizezan and Siema in the Barzan region, nearly 40 kilometres inside Iraq, killing three civilians and wounding six others.

"There have been indiscriminate Turkish air raids and

shelling of innocent Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), which cooperated with Turkey last year in a drive against the PKK.

"There are serious doubts that all these attacks are carried out by mistake by Turkey. There is no PKK presence in bases in the attacked area," the spokesman said in a statement.

"We condemn these raids and call upon the Turkish government to compensate the victims of the last air attack and end its cross-border attack on Kurdish civilians," the statement said.

Turkey's armed forces commander General Dogan Gures has pledged to wipe out the PKK by next spring, a goal which has eluded Ankara since the group launched its war for an independent Kurdish state in the southeast in 1984.

Cengiz Dereli, former spokesman of the Cologne-based Kurdistan Committee — illegal since last Friday — told reporters that Bonn had made a grave political mistake by supporting Ankara in its war against Kurdish separatists.

"Germany has attracted the enmity of the Kurdish people by playing a supporting role in their annihilation," said Mr. Dereli.

"It is highly possible that German installations in Turkey and in Kurdistan will come to harm," he said without specifying who might carry out the assaults.

Welsh police can't afford royal visits

LONDON (AFP) — Members of Britain's royal family may be asked to stop making official visits to South Wales because police can no longer afford the huge costs of ensuring their safety, press reports said Tuesday.

Faced with having to trim between £2 and £4 million (£3 and \$6 million) from its £131-million (\$195-million) budget, South Wales Constabulary wants all planned royal trips to the region postponed.

An emergency police authority meeting Monday agreed that the lords lieutenant of south, mid and west Glamorgan — the queen's local representatives — should be told that royal tours might face cancellation.

Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, is due to arrive in the Welsh capital Cardiff later Tuesday to hand out honorary degrees.

A further 19 royal visits are planned for the area before April. A Buckingham Palace spokesman said that the royal family still wanted to visit Wales and would take advice from the lords lieutenant.

The South Wales force is considering a list of other money-saving options, including an overtime ban, the temporary closure of 22 police stations and the possibility of making 180 officers redundant. "There is no way I want to go down this path. But if I am forced to make cuts of this level then these are the measures I may have to take," he said.

Vasarely sends back his Legion D'Honneur

MARSEILLE, France (AFP) — The Hungarian-born French painter Victor Vasarely has sent back his Legion D'Honneur in a bitter protest over the alleged misadministration of the foundation in Aix-en-Provence, southern France, which bears his name. In an open letter to President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, the 85-year-old artist said he was "cut to the quick, in the twilight of my life, to see the state allow unscrupulous officials to plunder my foundation" and denounced the ministers responsible for failing to act. "Despite being informed of the gravity of the offences for the past two years," the painter's daughter-in-law, Michele Vasarely, said all the letters and titles bestowed on him by France — the Legion D'Honneur, Arts Et Lettres, and the Ordre National Des Merites — had been deposited Monday at the Elysee Palace and the Hotel Matignon, the president's and prime minister's official residences. The artist has refused to speak to the press since giving a media conference last June 25 at his home in Annecy-sur-Marne, in the Paris region. The painter's family is at loggerheads with Charles Debbasch, a doyen of the faculty of law in Aix-en-Provence and the Vasarely Foundation's administration until last April. Both sides have accused each other of crooked practices and illegally disposing of paintings. Debbasch had his contract terminated in April by a court and a provisional director was to replace him, while local prosecuting authorities are investigating the allegations against him.

Judge refuses to delay Jackson copyright case

LOS ANGELES (R) — A federal judge Monday refused to delay a copyright infringement lawsuit against Michael Jackson despite claims the pop superstar was too ill to be questioned. Jackson is embroiled in a series of lawsuits and sex and drug abuse scandals. He is in Europe receiving treatment for an addiction to painkilling drugs, having abruptly cancelled his Dangerous world tour on Nov. 12 while in Mexico City. Jackson is also accused in a civil suit of sexually molesting a 13-year-old boy and five bodyguards have sued him over their summary dismissals, claiming they were fired because they knew too much about his "nighttime visits" with young boys. He also has a lawsuit pending in which he is suing his personal video photographer. In the latest development in the copyright case, U.S. District Judge Harry Hupp refused to delay the start of a trial in which Jackson is accused of infringing the copyright of three songwriters.

Ethiopia tries to save Somalia conference

ADDIS ABABA (Agencies) — Ethiopia, anxious to save a U.N. conference on aid to Somalia, is trying to persuade Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aided to attend a separate meeting of Somali parties, diplomats said Tuesday.

Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi, host of the U.N. conference boycotted by General Aided, wants to hold the meeting in Addis Ababa Thursday and hopes it will pave the way for a compromise between Gen. Aided and the United Nations, they said.

"So far things look pretty set for Thursday. We are told Aided is willing to come because the meeting will not involve the United Nations," one diplomat told Reuters.

The United Nations opened the conference Monday in an attempt to put relief operations in Somalia back on track.

But Gen. Aided and his group, the Somali National

Alliance (SNA), said they would not attend. They instead told the United Nations to get out of Somalia.

Mr. Meles, mandated by both regional leaders and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), has mediated several meetings which tried to bring about peace in Somalia.

The aim of the meeting Thursday is also to narrow the differences between Gen. Aided and his arch-rival, north Mogadishu warlord and self-styled President Ali Mahdi Mohamud.

"It's common knowledge that unless the two men reach some common ground efforts by people such as the U.N. to help Somalia are nothing but a waste of time," one diplomat said.

The Somali factions are expected to base reconciliation efforts on a peace accord signed by 15 factions in Addis Ababa last March. The accord

has so far been largely ignored. "Should they (the Somalis) fail to meet this time it is difficult to comprehend what the future holds for Somalia," the diplomat added.

Mike Sheeham, advisor to the U.N. special representative in Somalia, U.S. retired Admiral Jonathan Howe, said "we hope" a team from Gen. Aided's SNA would participate in the talks.

The SNA team, who were joined at their hotel here late Monday by Gen. Aided's ally Colonel Omar Jebs, were Tuesday to meet President Zenawi to discuss how they could take part, a source close to the team said.

Gen. Aided, whose militiamen fought U.N. forces in Mogadishu between June and October, proposed that a separate such meeting be held in the Somali capital in January next year.

"The purpose of this confer-

ence was to get all Somali leaders together in order for them to move forward the process of dialogue," Mr. Sheeham said. "We are very, very disappointed that all groups are not represented."

Diplomats have stressed that further international aid increasingly depends on political progress in Somalia, which plunged into clan warfare and famine after the January 1991 ouster of President Mohammad Siad Barre.

"The time is now for the Somali people to reconcile. Aid depends on that," Mr. Sheeham said. "At the same time there has been a great deal accomplished so far."

The dozen factions taking part in the talks on Tuesday discussed the rebuilding and rehabilitation of their Horn of Africa country, as donors stressed that aid would be directed in priority to areas regarded as safe.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel wants multilaterals in Arab states

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel and the United States are trying to persuade Arab states to stage all five tracks of the multilateral talks on the Middle East, a senior foreign ministry official said Tuesday. Washington will officially put forward the proposal on Dec. 15 when the multilateral coordinating committee meets in Tokyo and Israel will support it in the light of the Sept. 13 Palestinian autonomy deal. Egypt has already agreed to hold the session on refugees and Morocco to host the economic talks, the official said. The United States and Israel hope Qatar will stage the arms control talks, Oman water talks and either Bahrain or Jordan the environmental committee. The multilateral talks on regional issues are part of the peace process launched in Madrid in October 1991.

India to train Palestinian paramedics

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India is to train paramedics from the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho and offer scholarships to Palestinian students, Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh said Tuesday. India also plans to provide the autonomous Palestinian authorities in Gaza and Jericho with \$1 million worth of goods. Mr. Singh told a function marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In a message, Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao welcomed the Sept. 13 signing of the Palestinian autonomy accord. India is "ready to continue to extend material and technical assistance to the friendly Palestinian people to consolidate their progress towards self-government," he said. He said he hopes all parties in the peace process would take this opportunity to work for "a comprehensive settlement which restores to the Palestinian people their legitimate rights."

Settlers set up vigilante force

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Settler leaders launched a campaign Tuesday to recruit hundreds of volunteer guards from Israel to protect Jewish communities in the occupied territories. The move comes ahead of the deployment of the Palestinian police under the autonomy agreement and the scheduled start of the withdrawal of the Israeli army from Gaza and Jericho on Dec. 13. "We are appealing to people to join Hashomer and keep Jewish settlements strong, secure and alive just as Hashomer did before the state (was founded)," said Yechiel Leiter, a spokesman for the council of Jewish communities. The Hashomer watchmen guarded the early Jewish settlements before 1948. "The aim is mainly to defend isolated settlements," said reserve General Yossi Koller, who will be in charge of the operation which he said would be run in cooperation with the army.

Lebanon purges 500 civil servants

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Al Hariri has announced a purge of nearly 500 civil servants accused of corruption under an overhaul of the state administration. The 500 sacked officials are among 4,000 people classified by their ministries as either corrupt, chronically absentee, incompetent or superfluous whose fate is being decided by a government commission. Mr. Hariri said after a cabinet meeting late on Monday the government had accepted unchanged the commission's recommendation to dismiss the 500 categorised as corrupt. The government will announce Wednesday how many of about 1,200 workers accused of absenteeism will be fired. The 500 fired for corruption have not been named. They will receive no compensation but can appeal to the council of state, an administrative watchdog body.

Iran warns Kuwait against defence pacts

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's state-run radio Tuesday warned Kuwait to reconsider its policy of signing military pacts with countries outside the region, and called on it to seek regional

solutions for defence. The commentary on Tehran Radio was broadcast the day after Kuwaiti Defence Minister Sheikh Ali Al Sabah signed a defence pact with Russia in Moscow. The agreement includes joint naval manoeuvres by Russia and Kuwait, the first such exercises involving Moscow and a Gulf state. The broadcast said Kuwait's defence agreements with "big powers" such as the United States, Russia, France and Britain were understandable in view of Iraq's 1991 invasion of Kuwait. But it warned such pacts were not "free of charge" and could be used as a pretext for these powers to interfere in Kuwait's internal affairs or to start a conflict with its neighbours.

Vatican prepares Pope's Lebanon visit

BEIRUT (AFP) — A Vatican delegation is visiting Lebanon to prepare for a landmark visit here by Pope John Paul II, a spokesman for the papal envoy, Monsignor Pablo Puente, said Tuesday. The first ever papal visit to Lebanon will take place in the second half of May, according to the official National News Agency. But Mr. Puente told reporters that no date had been set yet for the visit. The delegation arrived on Sunday for a one-week visit. It is led by Father Roberto Tucci, who organises the Pope's travels abroad, his assistant Emile Tsherrig and Alberto Gaspari, a secular aide.

Velayati meets Hamas official

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's foreign minister has met with a leading member of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Tuesday. The state-run agency quoted Minister Ali Akbar Velayati as saying at Monday's meeting that his country's opposition to the peace deal was "unalterable." Iran is opposed to any peace with Israel and calls for its total destruction. It is also a key backer of Hamas. The Hamas official, Musa Abu Marwan, said the Palestinian peace accord with Israel was doomed to failure because it did not settle the problem of "the occupation of Palestine and the restoration of the rights of its people." Mr. Abu Marwan, who arrived in Tehran Sunday, said the purpose of his visit was "to exchange views with Iranian officials on the latest developments in the region." Mr. Velayati told Mr. Abu Marwan there were many pressures on Iran "to change its stand and give up support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian nation." He said "obviously, such disgraceful solutions would not bear fruit."

Denmark turns down PLO embassy request

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen has turned down a request by Yasser Arafat to grant embassy status to the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) future office in Copenhagen, saying "Denmark recognises states and not governments." Mr. Rasmussen said he told the PLO leader, who was on a 30-hour visit to Denmark, that he considered the PLO "as the representative of the Palestinian people" and that "its representatives could benefit from certain diplomatic rights," but that authorising a proper embassy was "out of the question." The question of diplomatic relations "must be discussed in consultation with the other European Community members," he said. The PLO had an office in Copenhagen between 1987 and 1990, when it was closed for financial reasons brought about by the Gulf war.

Weather stalls Israel-PLO economy talks

PARIS (AFP) — The resumption of talks on the economic aspect of the transfer of autonomy to Palestinian authorities in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank was delayed Tuesday by bad weather. The Israeli embassy in Paris said the Israeli delegation was unable to leave Geneva. The talks were suspended here last Thursday, with an agreement to resume Tuesday and continue until Dec. 6.